Manual of Meditations

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Manual of Meditations

PREPARATORY TO THE FEASTS OF

Our Lady's Immaculate Conception, of St. Joseph, and of the Visitation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary,

Followed by Meditations for the Feasts of St. Francis de Sales and St. Teresa

AND A

Novena in Preparation for the Feast of Pentecost.

For the Use of the

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

ST. LOUIS, MO. 1899.
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PREFACE.

TO satisfy the repeatedly expressed wish of many of our Sisters, it has been thought advisable to republish the little "Manual of Meditations" for the three yearly Triduums, and those preparatory to the feast of Pentecost.

To them have been added Meditations for the feasts of St. Francis de Sales and St. Teresa, the two great patrons of our Congregation.

In the preparation of this little volume, special pains have been taken to arrange the Meditations in conformity with the spirit and intentions suggested by our Constitutions, and much has been added from various great Saints and other approved Authors, so as to render the little Manual as helpful as possible, towards deriving from these *annual seasons of grace and benediction* all the devotion and spiritual profit, desirable for the souls of those who make use of the same.

To enable our Sisters to become more intimately acquainted with the venerated Founders of our Congregation, a brief sketch of them, as obtained from the most authentic, reliable sources, will supplement the present little volume.

Mother House,
South St. Louis, Month of St. Joseph, 1899.

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Triduum

Preparatory to the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

When Rev. Father John Paul Medaille, S. J., our venerated Founder, first wrote the Constitutions for his little Congregation of St. Joseph, he desired particularly to impress upon the Sisters a true love and devotion towards the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of God. From her they were to learn, and through her powerful intercession seek to obtain, the grace of fidelity to all the graces the Holy Spirit granted to them.

Among the three Triduums prescribed during the year, two are in honor of our Blessed Mother — that preceding the feast of the Immaculate Conception being the first in the order of time, in the Ecclesiastical year.

Let us, therefore, in the spirit of our saintly Founder, offer these days of recollection and prayer that the Immaculate Virgin may obtain for us a great purity of intention in our actions and whole conduct, and a great fidelity to all the graces. the Lord may deign to confer upon us.

Let us also ask that we may conceive great designs, and entertain ardent desires for the dear interests of Jesus and the salvation of souls.

FIRST MEDITATION.

Mary's Immaculate Conception.

First Prelude: Let us devoutly reflect on this great and singular privilege of Mary and, uniting with Holy Church, let us participate in the universal joy and admiration to which she gives expression in her sacred Liturgy on the vigil of this feast, when she sings: "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning, rising fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?"

Second Prelude: Ask through the powerful intercession of our Immaculate Mother that you may obtain a true knowledge of her greatness in reference to God, and learn to duly appreciate her merciful and compassionate goodness towards us, her sorrowing children, still in the exile of this world.

I. POINT.

Mary is the chosen one of the Ever Blessed Trinity—the elected daughter of the Father, — the predestinated Mother of the Son — and the chosen Spouse of the Holy Ghost.

All qualities, natural, as well as supernatural that were becoming the Mother of God, were lavished upon her. These were hers from the first moment of her existence, and she was the object of God's peculiar love and complacency. It was fitting that, she who was to be the Mother of the God-man should be, in every way, worthy of Him. Never did sin, nor the breath of sin tarnish the bright mirror of her matchless purity. "Thou art all beautiful, O Mary, and the original stain is not in thee," sings Holy Church in the Mass of this great feast. And again: "Glorious things are said of thee, O Mary: and He that is mighty hath done great things for thee." "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people."

How truly great and admirable are the privileges of Mary! But among the glorious array of all her gifts none shines forth with such heavenly splendor, as that of her Immaculate Conception. It is the most beautiful gem in her queenly crown.

Let us rejoice in the glory of our Immaculate Mother and return our fervent thanks to the Most Holy Trinity for all the gifts and graces bestowed upon her, but chiefly for the priceless privilege of her Immaculate Conception. Let us ask our heavenly

Mother to obtain for us great purity of heart, of soul and body, a great hatred of sin, and the love of mortification and penance, — virtues which will help us, always to preserve the priceless treasure of holy purity.

II. POINT.

Jesus, the Eternal Sun of justice who came into the world by Mary, to enlighten them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, wishes that we also should go to Him through her. He will not fail to enlighten us by means of that beautiful star — our true 'Star of Jacob'—who, as the great St. Bernard says, is the clear and brilliant star which is raised far above the wide and spacious sea of this world.

Over this she shines by the lustre of her virtues, her merits, her beautiful examples. — This benignant Star sheds brilliancy not only by innumerable proofs of her incomparable power, but especially by the countless multitude of her favors, and by her exceeding compassionate goodness and mercy towards us. "Hail full of grace" and "thou hast found grace with the Lord" said the Angel who announced to her the Incarnation of the Word. If Mary is laden with gifts and graces, it is that she may

give us of her superabundance. Gladly will she make us partakers in her treasures, if we only ask her for them.

What has been the measure of our confidence in Mary during the past? What have we done, to practice and promote devotion to her? In times of trial, in our conflicts with Satan, the world and our own unhallowed passions, have we been faithful to call upon Mary? Have we looked up for light and guidance in the darkness of our exile to our beautiful ocean-star, shining with the brightness of her Son who is the true light of the world?

We are sailing upon a raging sea full of dangerous rocks. How greatly do we need light to direct us into the secure way! Let us beseech Mary to enlighten our minds which are merged in darkness.

Let us ask her to make us docile to the truth. She is our Mother, and a Mother most merciful who will not fail to compassionate her sorrowful children, and direct their course into the safe haven of endless peace and rest.

Let us often salute the Angels of Mary, and humbly ask them to carry our messages of love and gratitude and our petitions to her. Our blessed Mother, who never leaves any act of devotion to her unrewarded, can-

not fail to be pleased with these childlike marks of affection and confidence.

III. POINT.

Life is a perilous passage. God is its end. We cannot have a safer guide than Mary. She is the model of all virtues. She is also the treasurer of God's graces and is ready and willing to bestow them on us. We cannot stray in following her. If we think of, honor and pray to her we are sure to triumph over the devil. It suffices not, to navigate safely; we must also reach the port of salvation. Mary who knows the way perfectly well, will conduct us thither. She entered there herself by her fidelity to grace. We are invited and encouraged to follow her by our venerated Founder, and it is this fidelity to grace that he wishes us to obtain through our blessed Mother's powerful intercession, as one of the chief fruits of this Triduum consecrated to her honor.

Are we faithful in instilling devotion to our Immaculate Mother in the minds of the persons we instruct, the children whom we educate; into the sick whom we nurse, the poor and unfortunate whom we visit and succor. What more powerful motives of consolation and encouragement than to show them Our Immaculate Mother, as the

comfortress of the afflicted, the health of the sick, the refuge of sinners, the help of christians!

Let us teach them, and ask them to teach others that well-known and beautiful prayer, called the Memorare of Saint Bernard.

In writing of Mary, this great Saint expresses himself thus: "When we think of and follow Mary, we cannot go astray. When we pray to her, we need never despair of being heard. When she upholds, we cannot fall. When she protects, no danger can betide us. When she leads, our following can never weary. In our perils, in the strait and tortuous ways, let us have recourse to Mary. When we invoke her holy name, we find ourselves at once relieved and delivered from our pains."

Colloquy with the Saints who were especially devout to the Blessed Virgin. Ask them to obtain for you a true devotion to the great Queen of Heaven.

SECOND MEDITATION.

Mary the Immaculate Virgin is Our Mother.

First Prelude: Imagine you hear our Blessed Mother giving praise and thanks to God in the voice of Holy Church who in the

Gradual of the Mass for the vigil of this great feast sings thus: "Come and attend to me all you that fear God, and see how much the Lord hath done for my soul!

Rejoice in God all the earth, sing psalms unto his holy Name: give glory unto Him."

Second Prelude: Humbly beseech Mary to obtain for you a grateful heart, and a cheerful, generous spirit of unselfishness and sacrifice.

I. POINT.

Our whole life ought to be a continual succession of acts of thanksgiving and gratitude to God for all His mercies and undeserved kindness towards us. But descending into particulars, we should thank Him every day for having made us children of the true Church. Ah, if we could but thoroughly understand this inestimable grace!

"After all," said St. Teresa on her deathbed in an extasy of joyous gratitude, "After all, I am a child of the Holy Catholic Church."

Then, what praises do we owe our Lord for having led us so sweetly into the 'enclosed garden' of holy religion where we are swimming, so to say, in an ocean of graces: where we are daily breathing the

atmosphere of holiness: where we are securely sheltered from the poisonous vapors rising out of the whirlpool of a perverted and perverting world for which the Son of God 'would not pray' on the eve of His sacred passion.

And what a mother has He not given us in Mary!—His own Immaculate Mother!—What a father and patron in the person of His own Foster-father, by whose name He desires us to be known in His Church!

Shall we ever be able to thank Him for the least of His benefits? Let us humbly supplicate the Sacred Heart of Jesus to offer to His Heavenly Father, for our shortcomings His own most worthy praises and thanksgivings and those of His Blessed Mother in her glorious canticle—the Magnificat.

All our Lady's feasts, but especially that of her Immaculate Conception, ought to be for us seasons of joy and affectionate thanksgiving: not only on account of all that we have received through her immaculate hands, but also because of the advancement of the dear interests of Jesus, and of the joy and glory that redounds to God in the possession of at least one creature who is and ever has been all His own. On her He can look with unmixed favor. Never has the enemy had any part in her. She

is a flower in His garden on whose snowy petals there is no stain.

One of the humiliations of this life is to find nothing perfect in it. There are always limitations and infirmities, something even in the best and holiest which we have to bear with and forgive. But in thinking of our Immaculate Mother, we are able to rest our hearts on a spotless ideal, on a most perfect creature.

Let us rejoice in our Lady's gifts and graces, and give thanks to God for them. By doing so we shall oblige and please her, who is the most grateful of God's creatures.

II. POINT.

By giving Mary to us as our Mother, her Divine Son has so ordered things that she is in closer and more real relations with us than any other creature: for there can be no tie so close as that of mother and child.

Now, this all-pure and spotless Mother in whom sin has absolutely no part, is at the same time the Refuge of Sinners. She reflects in a peculiar way, and by a peculiar privilege, the boundless compassion of God. The Saints are saints only in so far as they are like God: and the more they are like Him, the greater is their sanctity.

But none are so like Him as those whose

hearts are full of compassion for sinners — for the wretched — for the miserable of all kinds. This is the great distinguishing feature in the character of all the great servants of God. They do not judge, they do not hold themselves apart, they do not despair of sinners. They are their advocates and servants. They are ready to live and die, as their Master lived and died, for their salvation. "Jesus Christ," says the Apostle, "came into the world to save sinners," and this being so, his servants must do the same. Should not the spouses of Jesus Christ be in some sort regarded as the refuge of sinners! Like our sweet Immaculate Mother they should have a wonderful tenderness for weak and wandering souls. How many souls may be saved by only caring for them! And what else should we have in view, when caring for the bodily wants—when nursing the bodily ills of our neighbor, but the salvation of his soul? Is it this chiefly, that we seek? Then, let our eyes roam, just for a moment, over this broad land of ours with its millions of souls who know nothing of God,—souls perishing for the want of that bread which gives and sustains life—souls hungry for the word of God who, for the want of missionaries and means, could not as yet be reached. These

are confided to the compassionate charity of the spouses of our Lord. They are given to us that we may bring them to the sheepfold of Christ, the true and loving Shepherd of the flock purchased with His Blood.

How can we do it? By humble fervent prayer and supplication accompanied by acts of mortification and self-sacrifice; by being zealous in instructing children in catechism; by making use of every opportunity to instruct in the truths of our holy religion, those who apply to us, and by being really and entirely what we pretend to be:—true religious not unworthy of the name that, according to the words of the gospel, "our light may shine before men, in order that they may praise our Father who is in heaven."

If catholics in general, and religious in particular were always true to their colors, really unworldly and animated by a spirit of faith, how soon would the eyes of those around us be opened to the truth!

How can we better honor our Immaculate Mother who is the duly-chosen Patroness of our country than by taking a lively interest in the salvation of the souls that dwell therein! Let all such souls find in us help and pity. Very often they can only be reached through their body. Let us do

willingly and cheerfully what we can to help and console them, never thinking we do too much: nor ought we ever to measure our devotion to them by their gratitude. Jesus, our divine Saviour with His Immaculate Mother and St. Joseph ought to be our only models in the exercise of our charity.

As our Lord has committed to His blessed Mother the ministry of his loving kindness, so He seems to have done something the same for his spouses. He has made religious the ministering angels, not of justice, but of charity and long-suffering, that true mercy, which really means having a heart for the miserable.

May our dearest Mother obtain this grace for us, so that as we cannot imitate her in her one great privilege of being exempt from sin, we may yet become like her in her merciful compassion.

III. POINT.

Our Blessed Mother never tires of our importunities. She permits us to take all sorts of little liberties with her. Of course, what explains it is that she is a great vessel of compassion.

It is her characteristic, as it was that of her Divine Son whose perfections she reflects. One of our Lord's favorite sayings

was "I have compassion on the multitude." In working his most wonderful miracles, "He was moved with compassion."

But we need not seek scripture proofs to assure us of the loving compassion of God. Our own personal experience can bear out this testimony, a hundred and a thousand-fold.

But have we ever sounded the depths of the mysteries of the Divine Compassion? Let us consider what it implies. Our Blessed Lady will teach us. Nothing really could do our heart more good, than to meditate often on the compassion of God and His Blessed Mother.

Let us especially often and seriously reflect on the parable of the servant who would not forgive his fellow-servant a hundred pence, when his Lord had had compassion on him and forgiven him ten thousand talents. The apostle tells us, not only to be of one mind, but to be 'having compassion one for another' not merely to be compassionate to the poor and sick whom we visit, or find begging at our door, but compassionate one to another.

In the forty-fourth Psalm the Royal Prophet says to our Lord: "Grace is poured forth on thy lips" — words which are daily repeated in the Office of the Blessed Virgin,

and which signify that the words uttered by our Lord and His blessed Mother were gracious, tender, compassionate.

When we are tempted to say, we cannot work with one, or get on with another—that one is so trying and another so irritating, all would be remedied with a little more compassion, forbearance, pity for each other's defects and infirmities.

Let us consider our compassionate Lord who always took the part of those whom others complained of. He took the part of Mary Magdalen, when Martha complained of her; praised her, when Judas the traitor, would have condemned her lavishness: the part of His Apostles against the Pharisees, and although He could not excuse the sin of the poor creature whom these had brought to Him, yet He would not condemn her. O the boundless compassion of God towards His poor, erring creatures! These are lovely examples for us to reflect and meditate on.

We cannot imitate our Lord in His miracles; but in His Divine Compassion we can and must, if we do not wish to be separated from Him and His blessed Mother forever.

Would it not be very inconsistent to call ourselves children of Mary, if we bore no sort of resemblance to our Mother? If she could just take her place in a religious com-

munity for a month, would she not turn it into a heaven on earth, simply by the daily exercise of that sweet loving compassion which would make her tender, pitiful, courteous, long-suffering and tolerant with the least of God's creatures with whom she lived.

Let us ask her to teach us all the sweet graciousness of charity, and then this little corner of St. Joseph garden will daily bud forth fresh flowers flagrant with the odors of Paradise.

Colloque with St. Raphael Archangel — the angel of joy and gladness — the healer and comforter in human sorrows, the ministering spirit of God's comforts to man.

THIRD MEDITATION.

Mary Immaculate is the Honor and Glory of the Church Triumphant, the Hope and the Joy of the Church Militant, and the Comfort and Succor of the Church Suffering.

First Prelude: Imagine you hear the magnificent chant of Holy Church during the Mass of this great feast who, addressing Mary, sings thus:

"Thou art all beautiful, O Mary, and the stain original is not in thee!" Alleluja!

And again: "Glorious things are said of thee, thou City of God! Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people!"

Second Prelude: Humbly ask our Blessed Lady that according to the words of our saintly Founder "You may conceive great designs for the advancement of God's glory and the salvation of souls."

With all possible fervor and child-like confidence ask this as the special fruit of this meditation.

I. POINT.

O, how great is the honor and glory reflected upon all the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem by the singular privilege of Mary's Immaculate Conception! All heaven rejoices, the earth is made glad and hell trembles at seeing the sign of the "woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and crowned with twelve stars." Holy Mother Church here on earth celebrates this feast with great splendor. It will also be gloriously solemnized in heaven. But how paltry our earthly celebrations and ceremonies must appear, when compared with those of the heavenly Jerusalem! Yet they have this advantage: that by devoutly entering into the spirit of this great solemnity

with the dispositions of our Blessed Mother, we shall not fail to obtain a special participation in the graces flowing from this mystery and an augmentation of merit for eternity. The Saints in heaven cannot merit any more. Their time for gathering eternal treasures is past. They are now enjoying what they have earned during their life time: while we, exiled children of Eve, being still in this land of trial, have it in our power, by constant and persevering fidelity to grace, to increase our merits and ensure our reward in the life to come.

Let us ask our Blessed Mother to help us to make a good and holy use of our present opportunities. The past we cannot recall; but by humility and repentance we may obtain pardon and mercy for graces so wilfully neglected. It is only in the living present that "we can make our calling and election sure."

Ascending to-day in spirit into heaven, let us with the eyes of a lively faith contemplate the glory of our Immaculate Mother in the midst of the angels and saints—happy subjects of her imperial realm. With what joy do they contemplate her beauty, with what exultation celebrate her praises! She is loved and cherished by the Most Blessed Trinity, served by the angels, blessed by the

patriarchs, admired by the prophets, revered by the apostles, glorified by the martyrs, honored by the confessors, followed by the virgins and praised by all the saints of God. Let us unite with them all in giving praise and thanks to the Ever Blessed Trinity for all the graces and favors granted to Mary, but especially her Immaculate Conception — a privilege with which she alone in all the earth, was favored. Hence, Holy Church in the Mass of this great feast, congratulating her, addresses her thus:

"Blessed art thou, O Mary, by the Lord God, most high, above all the women of the earth!

Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people!"

In thanking our Lord for the gifts granted to our Lady, let us remember that in her, as in a fruitful soil, they grew and increased without any impediment, and fructified a hundred and a thousandfold even to the perfection of consumate sanctity: and it was her perfect fidelity to grace which obtained for her such immense glory in heaven.

After congratulating our Blessed Mother on the feast of to-morrow, on her graces and privileges, her joys and her glory, let us beg of her to obtain for us a faithful cor-

respondence with the graces, our Lord may deign to confer on us: ask the gift of final perseverance, and perseverance in our holy vocation. These are graces we cannot merit:—but they will be granted to persevering fervent prayer. May our Immaculate Mother obtain them for us, that we may one day have the happiness of seeing and praising her in the glory of paradise.

II. POINT.

The honor of our Lord is greatly promoted by the honor shown to His Blessed Mother. The whole history of the Church, from the Apostles down to the present, shows how near and dear devotion to her is to His Divine Heart: while the facts of all ages, but especially those truly great and strikingly wonderful events which have taken place in our own times, clearly demonstrate, how much and how intimately Mary is connected and identified with the interests of Jesus and the salvation of souls.

Jesus has placed His Immaculate Mother in the front of His Church to be its bulwark: —A token of all good, and a stumbling block of His enemies. Within our own century, at a period, when society saw itself on the eve of one of the most terrible political and moral convulsions, when, owing to

the unhappy dissemination of pernicious literature, thousands of christian families were threatened with loss of faith and becoming demoralized, our Blessed Mother, in pity descended among the children of men to warn, to exhort and fortify them against the seductions of the enemy of mankind, the flattery of the world and the opposition of their own unruly passions.

With what refinement of maternal tenderness does she not employ every means to rescue her poor erring children from the slavery which threatens and from dangers and chastisements which menace them!

The multiplied wonderful conversions consequent upon the establishment of the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary — the numberless extraordinary favors, temporal as well as spiritual, following the manifestation of the Miraculous Medal to one of the daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, and a few years later, the apparition of our Blessed Lady on the Mountain of La Salette, where she wept over the crimes of men, and deplored the unhappy lot of sinners, promising mercy and pardon to the repentant and threatening with chastisement the impenitent and obdurate: — all these events speak loudly of the maternal love of Mary for the children of the Church

engaged in deathly struggle with powerful enemies, where the outcome is, for certain souls, often so hazardous, so uncertain. But they also tell of her unspeakably great influence with her Divine Son, and the immense power she wields over Satan and his rebel crew. Mary is the treasurer of the graces flowing from the Sacred Heart from which she can draw at pleasure, to distribute, to her needy children.

She is truly the hope and the joy of the Church Militant who in her beautiful Antiphon, the "Salve Regina" which is repeated daily by millions of the faithful, invokes Mary as "our life, our sweetness and our hope."

Let us rejoice that we are children of the Holy Catholic Church which God never ceases to visit, with which he ever continues to dwell in the Holy Eucharist, and whose interests have a most powerful advocate in our heavenly Mother.

Among all the wonders operated through Mary in our times, none are so striking as those of Lourdes. In the miracles of Lourdes God prepared a new glory for the Immaculate Conception. It is in honor of, and by the favor of the Immaculate Conception that cures shall gush forth from that miraculous fountain, and sinners shall

find the joys of mercy in the graces flowing from the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother.

What, in truth, is the grace of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, if it be not the grace of total triumph of the Blessed Virgin over Satan? She crushes his head, and on that account, he can do nothing against her. From Mary this grace of innocence and victory flows into the Church, in order that she also may totally triumph over the old serpent who, for six thousand years, has seduced the world. Armed with the grace of the Immaculate Conception, assisted by her Queen—'the Virgin conceived without sin'—the Church will crush the serpent's head and triumph over her enemies.

The mystery of the Immaculate Conception is the precious pearl of our century, and the shield of the Church in the struggles of the latter times which are approaching.

The great miracle of Lourdes, unique in its kind, is, as it were, the heavenly crowning of the dogmatic definition of Dec. 8th, 1854: it seems to be the echo, the divine reflection thereof.

All of us, faithful children of Mary, living members and spouses of Jesus Christ, let us arm ourselves with a strong faith, following in the beloved footsteps of the

'Virgin without stain,' that at the hour of our death she may find us prepared, to enter with the wise Virgins into the possession of our heavenly inheritance.

III. POINT.

Mary Immaculate is not only the honor and glory of the Church triumphant, the joy and the hope of the Church militant, but also the comfort, the consolation and the succor of the Church suffering in purgatory. O how great is her pity and compassion for these dear souls who are the beloved spouses of Jesus Christ! Will she not rejoice in the many prayers and suffrages that will be offered by the faithful for their release and succor on occasion of to-morrow's great solemnity?

It is on account of her that the children of the Church militant are mindful of their suffering brethren, detained for a time, in the purifying flames of this region of pain. Mary is their Mother still, and loving them with a true Mother's love, she ardently longs for them to be with her in the glory of paradise. To reach there speedily, they stand in need of the suffrages of Holy Church. If therefore, we desire to give real joy to Mary and to please her in a special manner, let us offer prayers and supplica-

tions, small penances, slight privations—no matter how small — little sacrifices of our ease and convenience, yielding rights and points of honor, etc., with all the indulgences we shall be able to gain, into the blessed hands of our Immaculate Mother, as a spiritual bouquet for this feast so dear to her, that she may apply them according to the needs and conditions of the dear suffering souls.

May our Sweet Lady of Lourdes, the mother all-merciful, by the bright light of faith lead her children to an increase of good works for the benefit of the faithful departed.

O Mother Immaculate! Thou didst show thyself to Bernardette all beautiful, adorned with a beauty not of earth, but a spiritual beauty which is of God, obtain that by satisfactory works of penance and expiation we may help thee to restore to their pristine beauty the holy souls detained far from heaven and thee. Through the mystery of thy Immaculate Conception, so greatly glorified in our days and crowned with the halo of unnumbered and continued miracles at Lourdes, we humbly pray thee, obtain a copious stream of the precious blood of thy beloved Son to descend into purgatory, to cleanse, purify and adorn the suffering souls

and prepare them for a joyous participation in the glory of thy eternal festival in heaven.

In concluding this meditation let us make a colloque with the great St. Cyril, Father of the Church, so truly devoted to Mary, and join with him in his canticle of praise to the Mother of God:

"Hail O Mary! Mother of God, rich treasure of the world, inextinguishable lamp, crown of virginity, sceptre of true doctrine, temple which cannot fall, the residence of Him whom no place can contain, Mother and Virgin, by whom He is, who cometh blessed in the name of the Lord! Hail Mary, who in thy Virgin-womb contained Him who is immense and incomprehensible! Thou, through whom the Blessed Trinity is glorified and adored, through whom heaven exults, the angels rejoice, the devils are banished, the tempter disarmed, through whom the creature that was fallen is restored to heaven and comes to the knowledge of the truth, through whom churches are founded, and nations brought to penance, through whom the only-begotten Son of God has come to us!

Intercede for the people, mediate for the clergy and pray for the devout female sex."

Meditations

for the Triduum Preparatory to the Feast of our Holy Father St. Joseph.

Christians and much more religious cannot meditate too deeply on the life and virtues of the glorious St. Joseph, on his holy death, his power with God and the care he extends to the faithful devoted to him; but there are none to whom these consoling and instructive facts should be more the special subjects of meditation than to us.

Placed by our venerated Founder under the kind guardianship of this admirable Saint, he is in a particular manner, the patron of our Institute,—that is to say, he is our *Model*, our *Guide*, and our *Protector*.

We ought, then, by meditation, study his perfections for the purpose of imitating them — listen to his teachings that we may put them in practice—and give ourselves a just idea of his power of intercession with God, so as to have the greatest confidence in him.

It is impossible to meditate on this great servant of God without considering him in

his relation to Jesus, the eternal Son of God, and Mary, His Immaculate Mother. It is, therefore, from this standpoint that we always consider St. Joseph — from his intimate connection with Jesus and Mary.

To meditate on St. Joseph is eminently calculated to make us lead a life of faith. The prerogatives and virtues of our holy Patron will be a source of the most salutary thoughts and holiest aspirations to us, and such as are admirably in keeping with our holy state. There is in these a true spiritual treasury from which we can never draw too much, and whose effect will surely be to elevate our thoughts to the things of God, to lead us to the practices of the interior life, and to procure for us the sweetest consolations.

While meditating on St. Joseph we, moreover, instruct ourselves admirably in our duties, as regards the interior life; as well as the service of our neighbor to which our holy vocation as members of this Institute obliges us. From our holy Patron we are told to learn the science of prayer and true union with God; and again, it is to this loving Protector we are sent by our venerated founder to be taught the exercise of charity and zeal in the service of our neighbor. Let us, therefore, "go to St. Joseph

and do all that he shall say to us." With all the intensity of fervor of which we are capable, let us enter into the spirit of this little Triduum in preparation for the feast of our glorious Patriarch, in order to secure the continuance of his powerful protection on our Congregation and the advancement of its members in all virtues.

FIRST MEDITATION.

St. Joseph our Model.

First Prelude: Let us enter in spirit into the holy house of Nazareth, the true model of every religious house, and admiring with the angels of God the ravishing picture presented there to us by the Holy Family, let us imagine our holy father St. Joseph saying to us these words of the Apostle: "Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ."

Second Prelude: Ask this amiable Saint to give you an insight into the holy dispositions which animated him in his daily life and actions.

I. POINT.

The Excellence of our Model.

The masters of the spiritual life, and among others, St. Francis de Sales and St.

Teresa represent St. Joseph to us as the perfect model for religious persons and our venerated Founder, Rev. Father P. Medaille, S. J., in treating of the plan of our Congregation, writes these beautiful words:

"Ever mindful that the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist is the model upon which our little Congregation was formed, our dear Sisters ought to cherish an immense love and an ever increasing devotion to this Most Holy Sacrament which, having given life and being to our humble Institute, will also cause it to advance and increase in the virtues of humility, charity, sweetness, self annihilation and hiddenness of which our Lord has made it the depositary, and which are so sublimely set forth in this adorable Mystery. For this end, it has been confided to the special guardianship of St. Joseph, the most humble and most hidden of all the Saints."

What a subject for meditation! What cause for sincerest gratitude to be thus placed under the custody of so great a Saint, — to have so amiable a model before our eyes upon which to fashion ourselves!

"Go" said the Lord to Moses in directing him to make the ark of the covenant, "go and make it according to the pattern." St. Joseph, then, is our pattern which we must

ever keep in view, if we desire to render ourselves pleasing to God. Our soul, the temple of the Holy Ghost, so frequently the dwelling of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, is the ark which we must strive to adorn according to the pattern.

How beautiful is this pattern!—an object of complacency in the sight of the Most Holy Trinity, the comfort and solace of the Virgin Mother, and the joy and delight of the Heart of the Infant-God!

How holy and perfect is this pattern! Our blessed Patron was himself taught in the school of Divine Wisdom. He was formed and fashioned by Jesus and Mary, the holiest and most perfect persons on earth and, as he was docility itself, it can be easily imagined with what fidelity he stored all heavenly knowledge and endeavored to put it in practice.

II. POINT.

The Virtues of St. Joseph.

St. Joseph was eminently a man of faith. He looks at everything from a supernatural point of view. He does nothing through human motives. Each of his actions has its source in the Holy Ghost. Therefore, he excelled in the spirit of faith which ought to be the very foundation of religious.

In how far does my faith resemble that of my holy Patron? Do I accustom myself to look at things in the light of eternity, or do I let nature prevail, and explain and interpret matters according to its dictates? My beloved Father, intercede for thy child and obtain for me a large share in thy spirit of faith.

Joseph practised in its perfection the virtue of obedience. He obeyed without delay, without offering pretexts or excuses, and without complaint, showing that his will was absolutely conformed to that of God.

In sight of the sublime obedience of my holy Patron, have I not cause to be ashamed of my poor, imperfect efforts in the exercise of a virtue of which I have made a solemn profession?

As my obedience may sometimes be put to the test at the cost of heroic sacrifices, what would my dispositions lead me to hope for on such occasions? The example of my holy Patron must determine my purpose.... What sacrifices more heroic than that imposed on St. Joseph in his flight into Egypt! Yet he asks no questions, makes no delay, seeks no further directions, but simply obeys. Witness the fruit:—Egypt is converted. At a period not very far distant, the deserts, like a garden watered by a

bountiful stream, are blooming with a variety of mystical flowers—thousands of holy anchorets, monks and nuns whose voices resound in the wilderness, chanting the praises of the Lord: and great is the multitude of christians, both shepherds and flocks that are gathered in the temples of the great cities of this once idolatrous country. The presence and sojourn of the Holy Family has borne its fruit and turned it into a land of saints and martyrs.

Thus it may happen that the act of obedience that costs most to my nature, will be productive of the greatest good to the glory of God and the welfare of souls.

St. Joseph was poor in that poverty which Jesus Christ praises in these words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." His heart did not covet the goods of earth; for in Jesus he possessed the riches of Heaven. Do I rejoice when an opportunity is given me to honor the poverty of my blessed Patron? In comparing my spirit of poverty with his, what an immense distance do I find between them! Implore for me, my dear Father St. Joseph, a large share in those holy dispositions which made thy poverty so pleasing in the sight of God.

St. Joseph was chaste to a degree so per-

fect that God judged him worthy to be the spouse of the Immaculate Virgin — so pure that He who is the Sun of Justice and the splendor of His glory, and whose delight is to feed among the lilies, wished to remain thirty years in his company, and to give him every mark of honor, respect and love. What a model of purity he offers us in his person, while, at the same time, his blessed example points out to us, the precautions to guard this virtue. Great St. Joseph, guardian of the virginity of Mary, cast the mantle of thy singular protection over those who desire to be thy children.

III. POINT.

St. Joseph excelled no less in piety and devotedness. What was his life but a flight from the world, a continual prayer, union with God, and an uninterrupted meditation on the mysteries of the Divine Childhood and the great work of the redemption of the world! What did St. Joseph do here below but adore God, while, at the same time, he employed all his powers and faculties in His service? His whole life was a continuation of acts of sacrifice in the most devoted service of Jesus and Mary.

Must not my want of recollection and silence, my distractions at prayer and other acts of devotion, my lack of piety in the Divine service, my desire to put myself forward and to shine before men, fill me with shame and confusion, when I gaze on St. Joseph and witness his interior dispositions? Will not my beloved Patron have reason to disown me and tell me that I bear his name unworthily? But being a merciful Saint, he will have pity on his child — although unworthy, yet repentant and who at present desires nothing so much as to imitate him in future.

Finally, St. Joseph must be our model in constant progress and increase in perfection. Joseph means "increase;" Jesus who "increased in age and wisdom before God and man," and, Mary, ever increasing in all holiness and merit, were his models that he strove closely to imitate.

What efforts do I actually make to advance in virtue? What have been my efforts during the past, and what am I willing to lay as an offering at St. Joseph's feet, to be accomplished in the future?

Colloquy with our beloved Patron.

SECOND MEDITATION.

St. Joseph is our Guide.

First Prelude: Enter in spirit the humble dwelling of the Holy Family at Nazareth, and with the heavenly spirits admire the blessed intercourse of this earthly Trinity in their mutual relations to each other. Imagine your guardian angel pointing to St. Joseph, and saying to you: "Behold him—in whom is fulfilled what was prefigured by the ancient Joseph — whom the King made master of his house and ruler of all his possessions."

Second Prelude: Ask your blessed Patron to guide your steps in the paths of justice, of holiness and truth.

I. POINT.

St. Joseph our Guide in our Duties of the Exterior Life.

St. Joseph having been given to us as our Patron, has thereby become our guide in a special manner. What a glorious privilege to be guided by him who first directed the tottering steps of the Infant God—who was the conductor of our blessed Mother and her sweet Child during all their fatiguing and painful pilgrimages! With what confi-

dence do they trust themselves to his faithful care and devoted guidance!

Dear St. Joseph, who while on earth didst guide with such loving affection the sacred persons and the concerns of those dearest to thee, for the sake of Jesus and Mary, deign to cast a look of tenderness on thy children who cry to thee for help and who, with loving trust commit themselves to thy paternal direction on the road that leads heavenward and which, with God's holy grace, they have already entered.

This road, although clearly pointed out to us in our Constitutions, is not without its rocky precipices, its arid deserts, its dangerous pitfalls, its dark forests full of wild beasts lurking about to attack and devour us, and its dense undergrowth of thorns and brambles to tear and wound us. We need a sure and safe guide to point out to us the dangerous places to be guarded against, to discover to us the snares laid for us that we may avoid falling into them — a guide who will encourage us when dismayed, console us when afflicted, bind up our wounds when torn and bleeding, and refresh us when famished with hunger and thirst.

Our duties of the exterior life expose us to great dangers. Our triple enemy — the world, the flesh and the devil — will never

cease to make war upon us, to lead us astray from the narrow path that leadeth to life. Let us call upon our guide who is walking before us, to show us in the exercise of our charity to our neighbor, the dangers to be avoided by giving us a large share in his spirit of faith which will cast so bright a light across our path that pride and vain glory will have no share in our works. One look at our amiable guide will, by the light of eternity, reflected from his serene countenance, enable us to discover and avoid the precipice.

Our duties to our neighbor lead us to hold much intercourse with the world. There is danger of imbibing its spirit, of permitting ourselves to be controlled by its erroneous maxims. Who will save us from becoming entangled in its snares? Ah; let us turn to St. Joseph, our blessed Patron who, ever watchful over the welfare of those confided to his care, will not cease to light us with the brilliant torch of his strong and lively faith and his firm trust in God, that the false light of worldly wisdom and the regard of creatures will dwindle into insignificance.

St. Joseph must be our guide in the exercise of our charity. As he served Jesus and Mary, so should we see Jesus and Mary in the persons of our neighbor whom we are

called upon to serve — and O with what alacrity, promptitude and devotedness ought we to serve them!

Will not my imperfect dispositions and feeble efforts, when compared to the perfect charity of my beloved father fill me with shame and confusion? Would I make exception of persons in the exercise of my charity, if it were my habit to always view Jesus in the persons of those whom I serve?

St. Joseph served Jesus and Mary with devotedness, sweetness and affection.

In view of these holy dispositions with which thou servest Jesus, the son of God, and Mary, His Immaculate Mother, let me in future strive to follow thy blessed footsteps, O glorious St. Joseph! Thy example shall be my encouragement.

In my neighbor I shall ever see my Jesus —in the children whom I teach, the orphans whom I care for and educate, the sick whom I nurse and visit; in the ignorant whom I instruct; the poor whom I assist and solace; in the weary to whom I offer refreshment; the dejected whom I encourage, and the afflicted whom I comfort and console. — It is always and ever Jesus who presents Himself to me under these various guises, to receive my feeble services, and who — if I faithfully follow my beloved guide—on the

last day will say to me: "Come, you blessed of my father, etc., Because you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

Obtain for me, my beloved Patron, that my charity may not be unworthy of such a consoling benediction.

II. POINT.

St. Joseph our Guide in the Exercises of the Interior Life.

St. Joseph was, in the words of our saintly Founder "the most humble and the most hidden of all the Saints." He cherished the hidden, the obscure, the simple and retired life, because it afforded him better opportunities for holy recollection and union with God. Being, however, charged with the care of Jesus and Mary, our blessed Patron could not avoid the troubles and occupations incident to his position as head of the Holy Family; but he understood so well how to unite the interior life with his external employments that these were no hindrance to his interior progress towards the most exalted heights of perfection. He was forever occupied in the service of Him whom angels adore, and in the devoted care of her whom they delight to serve and revere as their queen. He was taught in

the school wherein the Holy Spirit teaches and, consequently, he was a marvel of consummate prudence and heavenly wisdom. His inward gaze was never removed from the one object of his love. Ever ready to fulfil his Heavenly Father's will in regard to the objects of his devoted care, ever trustful in the tender Providence of God, St. Joseph's mind was never disturbed, and his heart ever at peace — prepared for the secret and sweet impressions of His holy grace.

May our beloved Father St. Joseph obtain for us—his children—this calm trustfulness, this childlike confidence in God's ever watchful and tender Providence which is so necessary and so conducive to our rapid advancement in the spiritual life.

We are privileged to bear the name of our glorious Patron; but in order to honor the same, and to bear it worthily, we must necessarily love and cherish the interior life. How glorious to God, how truly calculated is such a life to nourish the loftiest virtues and the most exalted holiness! Had there been any other life more perfect and more pleasing to God, the eternal Father would surely have chosen it for His beloved Son who desired to pass the greater part of His earthly career in silence and obscurity,

subjecting Himself to the labors of a poor artisan, eating His bread in the sweat of His brow.

How was the condition of labor honored in the person of the Son of God made man! Ought not those whose employments subject them to manual labor and the fulfilment of humble duties rejoice, to be thus associated to Jesus, Mary and Joseph? If sanctifying their labors in union with those of the Holy Family, what will be the height of celestial glory that their exalted merits will have obtained for them at the close of their earthly pilgrimage!

To love retirement, to covet obscurity, to cherish a laborious life, in humble subjection to God's holy will, thereby to follow more closely the Holy Family at Nazareth, is not in accordance with the desires of flesh and blood, but in perfect conformity with the lofty thoughts of the children of God, who ever find their joy in humble subjection, their glory in obscurity and their peace in true union with God.

Do we desire to be of this number? Then, let us rejoice when others are preferred to us — when others are honored, applauded, sought after, and we ignored — neglected; when the works and undertakings of other religious are favorably noticed, and our

own passed over in silence — or, perhaps, even found fault with in public. Provided we have done our duty, and by our labors striven to promote the interests of our Lord and the welfare of souls, all will be well. Perhaps our beloved Patron prayed for this that the merit of our zealous efforts may not be lost to us for eternity.

Let us learn from St. Joseph the science of prayer and holy meditation. It is in proportion to our progress in this blessed science that the virtues which St. Joseph longs to see in his children, will develop and grow within us. He learned to pray from Jesus and Mary:—His goodness will not refuse to direct us in this most necessary exercise of the interior life. May his sweet charity ever assist us so to unite the interior spirit with our many exterior employments, that these latter, far from being an obstacle to our progress in solid virtue, may aid us to accomplish much for God's greater glory and the good of souls as well as for our own spiritual advancement.

Great St. Joseph who art so accomplished a master in the school of prayer and the interior life, teach us your children, to always seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and the rest, according to the promise of our Lord, shall be added unto us.

III. POINT.

St. Joseph our Guide in the Perplexing Trials and Sufferings of this Life.

The guide whom the sweet Providence of God has appointed for us is St. Joseph. He himself, tried and made perfect in the school of sorrow and affliction, will know how to pity, how to compassionate and encourage us to sanctify our trials by the infinite merits of Christ's superabundant satisfaction in His passion and death.

Next to the sorrow of the Queen of Martyrs, there never was sorrow like unto that which penetrated the heart and soul of our beloved Patron during the various stages of his life, principally from the time of his association with the mystery of the Redemption. There is therefore, no sorrow or suffering of ours which will not find its comforting balm in the compassionate heart of our beloved Father, if, like truly devoted children, we turn to him for consolation, counsel and encouragement.

When oppressed by sadness, disturbed by fear, attacked by sickness and pain, let us go to Joseph; he will comfort and console us. He will show us that sufferings, if rightly received and patiently borne, will merit for us an everlasting recompense.

Are we disheartened by disappointment, by a want of success in our undertakings and employments, our holy patron will encourage and help us. Are we dismayed at the persistence of some dangerous temptations — he will succor us and put our enemy to flight. If weary and fatigued, let us ask our blessed guide to introduce us to the "holy travellers" going to Egypt, or in their humble home at Nazareth, that their sweet cheerfulness, their humble resignation to God's holy will, may be unto us a lesson and an encouragement in our fatigues and labors.

In moments of doubt and perplexity, let us have recourse to our beloved Patron who is well acquainted with this species of trial, and who will not fail to lead us out of the labyrinth and make our path clear to us. Oh, if in all our trials we would turn promptly to St. Joseph, and learn to imitate his virtues, what lights and graces would he not obtain for us!

Dear St. Joseph, never permit us to lose the merit of our sufferings by receiving or submitting to them from motives unworthy of thy children!

St. Joseph will be our guide, especially at the approach of death. Our holy Mother the Church, in her beautiful Responsory in

honor of this glorious Saint, points him out as the special patron of the dying. He who had the happiness of dying in the arms of Jesus and Mary, will not refuse to help his children at their last moments. His own death-hour was made so glad and blissful by the presence of his Creator and Redeemer—who was at the same time his devoted Foster Son—and that of his Immaculate Spouse, the most holy Virgin, that he cannot but listen in pity to those who fervently commend to him their last moments. He will shield them against the wiles of satan who, knowing that the time is short, and that the fate of the poor soul depends upon the end, will do all in his power to prevent it from being saved.

O blessed Saint, our loving Patron, be thou near us in that awful hour upon which our eternity depends! Shield us from our foes by obtaining for us, thy children, the signal grace of dying in the presence and under the sweet protection of Jesus and Mary; and may we, after having passed under thy own gracious guidance through the dark valley of death, safely reach the haven of peace and rest on the shores of a blessed eternity, where we hope, in thy blessed company to praise the mercies of the Lord forever.

THIRD MEDITATION.

St. Joseph is our Protector.

First Prelude: Imagine you see our blessed Patron St. Joseph raised high in heavenly glory, encouraging you to labor courageously for its acquisition by imitating his virtues.

Second Prelude: Humbly ask our Lord to teach you how to love and reverence His foster-father as He did, and to inspire you with great confidence in his powerful intercession.

I. POINT.

St. Joseph being in a special manner our protector, we ought to have recourse to him in all our necessities. St. Joseph is very anxious to help us. Being a most kind and charitable Saint, he is ever ready to give his aid and protection to those who apply to him.

In proportion as the saints love God, so does also their love for man increase; and what saint is there who ever loved God as St. Joseph did! As works are the proof of true love, we need only cast a glance at what St. Joseph did for our Lord and His blessed Mother:— Nazareth, Bethlehem, Egypt, Jerusalem speak louder than words, and proclaim the exalted perfection of his

devoted and self-sacrificing charity, his affectionate solicitude in caring for Jesus and Mary.

Does not our glorious Patron in the words of the ancient Patriarch Joseph to his brothers appear to say to us: "Fear not, I am Joseph?" Take courage and have confidence in me, for I am ready to help you. Come to me, poor sinful soul! Cast yourself with unlimited trust into the arms of my protection. Have you lost father, mother, relatives, friends? I will be your father, your friend. Have you strayed from the true path that leads to life? I shall be your guide to point out the way for your safe return. Are you sad, disheartened? I shall be your consoler.

"I am Joseph," the guardian of the treasures of the King of Heaven, the dispenser of all His graces. Be not dismayed, invoke me with confidence: "I am Joseph" who am able and willing to succor you in all your necessities.

After listening to these sweet and encouraging words, could we still doubt St. Joseph's goodness of heart? Are we still timid in asking his help? Would we not be unjust to our beloved Father, in not recognizing his paternal kindness!

II. POINT.

We ought to have recourse to St. Joseph in all our needs, because he is not only willing, but also able and powerful enough to help us in all our necessities.

According to the testimony of St. Teresa, whom some learned spiritual writers call "The most brilliant star" in the jewelled crown of St. Joseph, this glorious Saint succors us in every kind of necessity.

In constituting St. Joseph the adopted father and guardian of His Divine Son and the worthy spouse of Mary, the Mother of God, the eternal Father gave him all power in Heaven and on earth. He held jurisdiction over Jesus and Mary, and they were subject to him. St. Joseph refused them nothing here on earth, and now they cannot refuse him anything in Heaven. The supplications of St. Joseph are like commands, when addressed to Jesus and Mary. In grace and in glory, St. Joseph ranks above all angels and saints in Heaven, and there holds a position in keeping with his exalted dignity as foster-father of the Son of God and spouse of the Immaculate Virgin, the great Queen of Heaven and earth.

Ought we not, then, have the most unlimited confidence in the patronage of our blessed Father?

May our sweetest Mother Mary who was

ever most devoted to her cherished spouse obtain for us this child-like trust and confidence!

III. POINT.

If you are truly devoted to St. Joseph, he will certainly help you in every necessity. The great power and dignity of this glorious Saint have not been given him for himself —for his own advantage alone, but that he might employ them for our salvation.

St. Joseph is, as it were, the father and common provider of all the faithful, but ours in particular.

It is to his patronage and to his powerful protection that our venerated founders committed our humble Institute at its first foundation, that it might be nurtured by his silent teachings, fortified by his example, guarded from evil by his kind, thoughtful providence, and advanced in holiness and perfection by the interior spirit and ardent charity of this glorious Saint.

The eternal Father, while choosing Joseph for the foster-father of His beloved Son, willed that he should also be the father of the adopted brethren of Jesus; and as, in virtue of his office he was obliged to succor and protect Jesus, the eternal Son of God, so in virtue of our adoption, this blessed Saint is likewise obliged to attend to our interests and various necessities.

Moreover, the preservation of his good name really obliges our beloved Patron to come to our aid. If after praying to St. Joseph with the greatest confidence, we should fail to be heard, could we not gently plead with him in the words of some of his devoted clients: "O blessed Patriarch! What has become of thy great power—thy celebrated goodness — after being assured by so many saints, but especially by the Seraphic Virgin St. Teresa of Jesus, that they did not remember ever having asked anything of thee, without being heard!"

Thou must, therefore, my dearest Patron St. Joseph, obtain for me from Jesus and Mary, who cannot deny thee anything, the favor that I ask of thee for the greater glory of God and the good of my soul which is so dear to thee. I know that on account of my sins and infidelities I do not deserve it; but thou, O glorious Saint meritest it, and through thy powerful protection I hope to obtain it.

Colloquy with St. Teresa who labored with such incessant ardor in promoting devotion to St. Joseph. Ask this Seraphic Virgin, but ask especially, our Immaculate Mother to teach you to become truly devout to the great foster-father of our Lord, and our own special patron and protector.

Triduum

Preparatory for the Feast of the Visitation of the Most Holy Virgin.

Our Holy Rule prescribes this Triduum during which we should endeavor to redouble our zeal and fervor, so as to prepare ourselves in a becoming manner for the renewal of our holy vows.

Let us therefore, like Mary in her glorious Magnificat, profoundly humble ourselves in the presence of God, and in the *first Prelude* call to mind the sweet mystery and the circumstances of Mary's visitation to her cousin Elizabeth.

Consider Mary's promptitude in arising and going with haste across the hill-country of Juda.

At the sound of the voice of her salutation, the heart of Elizabeth is inspired, and the child in her bosom leaps up for joy and is sanctified by the presence of his Saviour, still in the womb of His holy Mother.

Second Prelude: Let us humbly ask Jesus to come with Mary, during these days of recollection, to visit and sanctify us, as He

visited and sanctified St. John the Baptist, while still in the womb of his Mother Elizabeth: — And, that this divine visit may efficaciously work in us an entire renewal in the religious life, let us most fervently implore the powerful intercession of our blessed Mother.

I. POINT.

Obedient to an impulse of the Holy Spirit and the dictates of charity, Mary hastens to visit her holy cousin whose motherhood she has just learned from the lips of the angel.

Desiring to set forth the promptitude with which our blessed Mother executes the designs of Almighty God, the Gospel says: "And Mary rising up went into the hill-country with haste, into the City of Juda."

Behold our model of promptitude in the execution of the divine command! Mary delays not, nor puts off, what she is conscious to be the will of and the good pleasure of God. Notwithstanding the wearisomeness of the journey, she travels with haste across the hills of Juda. She enters into the house of Zachary and salutes Elizabeth, and the Gospel says: "And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the Infant leaped in her womb, and she was filled with the Holy Ghost, and

crying out with a loud voice, she said: "Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." Beautiful words! which are repeated every day in the "Hail Mary" by thousands and millions of souls. Blessed indeed is Mary: for she carries in her bosom the Incarnate Son of God. Truly happy the abode of her kinsfolks to which she brought such inestimable blessings!

Blessed, too, will be our houses which Mary, with Jesus, will deign to visit and sanctify! Blessed a thousand times, our souls, if by humble, earnest and fervent prayers we hasten their coming unto us, and cause them to abide with us!

O Immaculate Lady! deign to visit us with thy beloved Son Jesus, and obtain that this divine visit may operate such wonders of grace in our souls, as to bring about a complete renewal of our lives in Him, that in all truth it may be said of us: "This indeed is the change of the right hand of the Most High."

II. POINT.

Let us consider the motives which animated our Blessed Lady in her visit to her cousin Elizabeth.

First of all it was obedience — Obedience

to a strong impulse of the Holy Spirit which urged her to practice an act of charity towards her cousin, and the child still unborn in her bosom. She, the happy Virgin-Mother, had no sooner been informed by the angel that Elizabeth was blessed with child, than she set out in haste to visit, to congratulate and to serve her kinswoman under the trying circumstances of her advanced motherhood.

Mary obeys promptly the superior impulse of grace which urged her to visit her holy cousin, and thus providentially cooperates in the divine economy of the Incarnation of the Word. It is through Mary's act of obedience that the Baptist, while still in the womb of his mother, is sanctified by the presence of the Redeemer, and consecrated, so to say, for his exalted office of Percursor of our Lord.

Let us not think, that our Lady's journey was undertaken without sacrifice on her part. No! While her great love of virginal modesty naturally led her to shrink from the gaze of the world and cherish holy retirement, our Blessed Mother would, nevertheless, relinquish her own personal satisfaction in order to fulfil God's holy will.

Being the mother of divine Wisdom, she judged that "Obedience was better than sacrifice."

Then, when we consider the many inconveniences and the fatigue of the long journey during the warm season of the year, across mountains and hills—upon roads, not smooth and convenient, but very uneven and rugged in the extreme, we can form a slight idea of how much it must have cost our sweet Lady, to leave the quiet enclosure of her humble home at Nazareth. She, however, knew no other pleasure or satisfaction, than the perfect accomplishment of the most just and holy will of God.

Does our obedience participate in the spirit of that, practised by Mary?

What attention do we give to the still and holy voice which makes itself heard in the interior of our soul? Do we not, sometimes, turn a deaf ear to it, and try to persuade ourselves that we were mistaken, and that we just fancied it, when in our heart of hearts we felt convinced, that God had indeed, made known His will to us by the silent whisperings of His grace?

And why all this, but because we are afraid of trouble.

By the light of eternity reflected upon us in our meditation, we have seen, how much pleasure we could give to God by a certain act of humility—of charity—of self-sacrifice: but the humiliation would be too painful,

the mortification demanded, too troublesome:—therefore, we would rather make ourselves comfortable and believe that the Lord had not spoken to us, and that after all, we had better content ourselves with doing just what we were obliged to, and nothing more. How many would-be saints have been unmade with reasoning like this!

Have we ever reflected that, perhaps the act of virtue, or the victory over some temptation which costs most to nature will, with grace, if acted upon promptly, bring the greatest good to our souls, or to the souls of others?

May our heavenly Mother preserve us from the truly miserable fate of the five foolish virgins who neglecting to fill their lamps betimes with the oil of charity and good works, unhappily exposed themselves to come too late to enter with the heavenly Bridegroom into the marriage-hall of the heavenly Jerusalm.

But rather like Mary—our model of perfect fidelity—let us sweetly follow the attractions and inspirations of divine grace that like her, we may also reap the fruit of our obedience and self-sacrifice.

Mary hastens in the execution of the divine will, and thus cooperates with the designs of the Word made flesh, now dwell-

ing in her as in His immaculate tabernacle. Jesus wishes, thus early, to cleanse His Precursor from the stain of original sin, and to consecrate him as His herald to announce His coming and prepare His way; but it is through Mary's cooperation that all these wonders are achieved.

Truly happy Mother, whose child deserved to be thus favored by Him who came as the salvation of the world! Most blessed child, thus early freed from the bonds of sin!

Inspired by God, Mary here utters her glorious canticle of praise—the Magnificat—which is now daily recited or chanted in the Church by millions of her children, and thus, our Lady's prophecy: "Behold, all generations shall call me blessed," is continually repeated, and at the same time verified.

From Mary then, let us learn, to bring the acceptable sacrifice of obedience, of praise, and of prayer for the welfare of souls so dearly purchased by Jesus' precious Blood.

III. POINT.

Mary went to visit her holy cousin to fulfil the sweet law of charity.

What joy and gladness did not our Lady bring to that blessed household! What graciousness do we behold in that mutual greeting between the Mother of the Saviour

and the Mother of His Precursor upon their first meeting! How few the words spoken by our blessed Mother, yet how sweet and tender they were! How heavenly the conversation to which Elizabeth was found worthy to listen for the space of three months during which our Lady dwelt under her roof, and how the mother of the Baptist must have profited by their blessed mutual intercourse! Must not she and the child of grace in her bosom have been wonderfully influenced by the presence of the Saviour, yet enclosed in the spotless tabernacle of His Mother's womb?

O truly beautiful mystery of the Visitation of Our Lady! What gladness, what joyousness, what humble, grateful love does it not suggest to us! Its spirit is fully expressed in the "Magnificat"—the only canticle ever composed by our Lady and, as tradition tells us, daily repeated by her.

Mary undertook the journey to Hebron, to congratulate her kinswoman on her present happiness, and to show how much she appreciated the gifts of God within her; to join with her in fervant thanksgiving to the Most High for all His gifts and graces to them both.

But she likewise offers her kind services to assist her in various little preparations

for the approaching event of the birth of the Baptist. Our Sweet Lady's humility dictates to her a variety of little acts by which she practises charity in most exquisite and gracious ways.

In obedience to the wishes of our venerated Founders, let us go to our blessed Mother in this happy mystery of the visitation that in the exercise of our charity towards the dear neighbor, especially in our visits to the poor and sick, she may teach us how to enter into her own holy dispositions with which she was animated in her visit to her cousin Elizabeth, and let us ask this as the special fruit of this meditation.

O, if we always performed this duty in the spirit and with the holy dispositions of Mary, what precious fruits would we not be able to gather from these visits!

O holy, Immaculate Mother deign to infuse into us thy spirit, and graciously replenish our hearts with thy heavenly charity, that our little services rendered to our neighbor may produce wonderful effects for the glory of God's holy name.

SECOND MEDITATION.

Our Vocation is a Priceless Grace and a Hidden Treasure.

First Prelude: Imagine you hear our Lord addressing you in these words of the Gospel: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go, and should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit shall remain."

Second Prelude: Humbly ask through the intercession of our blessed Mother that you may appreciate your holy vocation as a grace of inestimable value—the "treasure hidden in the field" and the "pearl of great price," spoken of by our Lord in the parable of the Gospel.

I. POINT.

While dwelling on earth, during the years of His public ministry, our Divine Lord was pleased, when preaching to the multitudes that flocked to Him, to speak in parables. And how great is the wisdom which herein displays itself! The truth conveyed by parables is more palatable, and not so easily forgotten.

Some of the parables spoken by our Lord have, according to the opinion of spiritual

writers, a special reference to the religious life. Thus, the "hidden treasure buried in a field," would seem to signify a religious vocation.

In calling us to this holy state, our Lord offered us the "hidden treasure."

This treasure is buried in a field — a sort of a common field to look at — and to purchase it, we had to pay a high price, even all we had to give in this world: all our liberty, all our time, all our strength and all our heart: and that even until death. And we had to pay the price down, before we were actually in possession of our treasure; for it lies very deep, and we had to dig hard to get at it. Deep down into the ground of our own nature, we had to dig with the sharp tools of mortification, self-denial, obedience, humility, patience, prayer, and thus persevering day after day in well-doing.

Have we not sometimes found it hard to dig—to work incessantly, sometimes piercing, or trying to pierce the hard stony soil of our hearts in which our treasure is hidden away.

Perhaps we have had to listen to the jibes of our enemies, who were by no means, pleased with our persevering labor. Many times we may have heard the whisperings of

flesh and blood advising us to give ourselves a little more rest from persistent killing work: — while the old enemy with his triumphs and failures of six thousand years has not failed to frequently ask us: "Is your treasure really worth all this trouble, this ceaseless labor? Have you not, after all, been deceived in regard to its being there? Will not all your labor be time lost? You might just as well stop now, than have to give up in the end."

What has been our reply on such occasions? Did we give our enemy cause of joy, or inspire him with dread! St. Teresa says, the devil is afraid of courageous souls and fears their determined persevering efforts in well-doing more, than severe penances and mortification. Let us be of this number, and considering the inestimable value of our treasure for which we have already paid all we possessed in this life, let us be persuaded that no labor can be too great, no sacrifice too painful, to attain and enjoy the possession thereof.

The treasure we are digging for is no other than the kingdom of heaven, which our Lord has promised to all those who leave all to follow Him.

Here below, it is dominion over self, freedom of heart, union with God, and having

Him in exchange for the perishable creatures we have given up for His love: and finally it will bring us the possession and enjoyment of Himself in the life to come.

And now setting this truth well before our eyes, let us honestly put this question to ourselves: Is not this treasure worth the price? If we have given all we had for it, have we not done wisely? Or shall we regret and take it back?

If we are only serving God by half-measures, we have not given all we had, and until we do, the treasure will not be ours.

Sweet Lady Immaculate! Mother of all graces, obtain for us from thy beloved Son a great love and esteem for our holy vocation, and help us to render it fruitful in all good works and meritorious for eternal life.

II. POINT.

If our vocation to the religious life is typified by the parable of the "treasure hidden in the field" the similitude of the "pearl of great price" signifies sanctity — the perfection of virtue.

Spiritual writers tell us that, to be called to religion and called to be a saint, are one and the same thing. Religious are, in virtue of their holy profession, obliged under pain of sin to strive after perfection·

yet, to be sure, all religious are not saints. They are approaching sanctity only, in proportion to their efforts to practice heroic virtue. The "heroic" is more than ordinary: it is the fruit of a higher and holier motive in action. It suggests lofty courage as the fruit of great love — a generous forgetfulness of self, and presupposes in the one called upon to practice it, a true, deep humility.

The pearl of great price is to be found in the deep ocean, and whoever wishes to obtain it must descend into its depths.

It is only by descending into the abyss of our nothingness that we can hope to practice perfect virtue. No saint has ever become one, without the practice of humility, and the higher the degree of sanctity to which they aspired, the lower the depths to which they had to stoop, in order to attain to the lofty and truly desirable heights, upon which the true children of God are accustomed to dwell.

Heroic virtue is not common — it implies the conquering of difficulties, the overcoming of obstacles. The man who found the pearl had to dive for it and bring it up from the depths of the sea at the risk of life. It is indeed a precious pearl which had to be brought up from a great depth. One was

found who descended into the deep waters to obtain it; for it was purchased for us by the Blood of Jesus. — But to obtain of our Lord, and appropriate to ourselves this precious pearl of sanctity, it is necessary that we too, should descend into the deep sea of our nothingness by humiliation and suffering. One saint does more for God's glory, than a thousand ordinary christians, and one act of heroic virtue is more precious and more fruitful than any number of imperfect acts. This consideration frequently called to mind, might lead to great results amongst those who have consecrated themselves to Almighty God.

But to obtain possession of this precious pearl of heroic virtue, we stand in need of special succor from above. It is to Mary, the Mother of humility we must turn, who declares in her blessed canticle that God, in choosing her to be His Mother, had regarded nothing but the humility of His handmaid. Now, there is great reason for associating the pearl, the most precious among all the precious stones, with our Lady and humility. It is through Mary's intercession we hope to obtain the priceless pearl of sanctity. She is the Mother of final perseverance — that inestimable grace we cannot merit; but we depend upon her to obtain it for us.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the dying! Pray for us now and in the hour of our death!

Mary will be for us truly the "gate of heaven."

But humility must also be our way to glory. Without it the door will never open for us. Useless to bring our fancied store of merits to the gates, if humility be wanting, no amount of pleading can ever gain admittance there.

III. POINT.

The Parable of the Grain of Wheat.

The words of this parable, given by our blessed Lord imply first of all a prophecy of His own death. He was to purchase life for the world. Our Lord says: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

The application of this image is not difficult. We are, each one, the grain of wheat, insignificant enough: and yet, each one contains a germ of life. Given the grace of God and the adhesion of our own will, there is in each one of us the possibility of high sanctity.

All the labors of a St. Francis de Sales, of a St. Teresa, a St. Ignatius Loyola, all the teaching of St. Thomas, all the monastic life of beauty and holiness which sprang out of the Rules of St. Benedict, St. Francis, St. Dominic and others, once lay a hidden germ in the souls of these servants of God, and had they remained alone, the germ would never have developed, and the mighty harvests of their lives would never have been reaped.

There was a time, when St. Francis Xavier was a gay student at Paris with no thought, but of a worldly career before him. Yet within him lay hidden the germ of the career of the Apostle of the Indies. To develop that germ, what a change, as of death, must pass over him! He must fall into the ground indeed, and die, and he refused not, so to do.

Blessed indeed is the little grain of wheat which, the divine Sower takes in His hands, which He sows Himself in the favored field of His Church, where the dew of heaven falls upon it in abundance, where the sun of grace darts its warming vivifying rays upon it, where the friends of God busy themselves much about it—planted in fertile soil which has been blessed by the zeal of the Apostles, the courage of the martyrs,

and the constancy of the saints. But the little grain of wheat falling into the ground must die, before it will yield its fruit, according to the desire of the divine Husbandman. Truly blessed the soul that corresponds with God's infinite goodness by suffering itself to be placed in the ground, by abasing itself in humility, and dying by mortification and a holy abandonment of itself into the hands of God. Buried in the earth, the little grain must die, or at any rate, pass through a transforming change which is the likeness of death. It must lose its old life, its old form and manner of existence, all that must become nothing and return to dust, that the new life of that little germ may spring forth in new and beautiful forms.

All of us who are signified by this little grain, must give all for all, if we wish to bring forth fruit and gather a harvest of souls into the heavenly garners.

What we must give up, is that central germ of self out of which proceed the motives of our exterior acts. This is what our Lord designates in the gospel, as our life which we must hate, if we wish to keep it unto life eternal. Self-value, self-esteem, self-judgment, self-complacency, self-will,—our own interests, our own likings and

dislikings, our tastes, our freedom, our sympathies and antipathies: — all this has to fall into the ground and die. In other words, it must be humbled and mortified, as the absolute condition of bringing forth much fruit.

How can we die? We cannot do it ourselves; but if one thing is more true than another, it is that God always provides the instrument for putting nature to death. Death — even death of the cross is always awaiting us. We who live under the easy yoke of religious rule, may find this death in a life of obedience which is death to self-will, and in a life of humility which is the death of pride and self-judgment.

We may crucify our selfishness by fraternal charity, and our love of ease and indulgence by regular observance and punctuality. In fact, the cross is always waiting at our door, the furrow of our daily life and daily rule is ever open, into which is cast the grain of wheat. Rightly regarded it is an easy cross, and comparing it with the heavy and severe crosses of many souls, living in the world, we should, indeed, give thanks to God who placed his light yoke and easy burden upon us.

Nature, however, must die, and what we need to nerve our resolution, is confidence

in the promise of God. His word can never fail: "If it die, it shall bring forth much fruit." We should bring home our sheaves rejoicing. The death of selfwill always and most surely proves the forerunner of a new and glorious life of grace.

You, O religious soul, give up self-judgment, and lo! you find your interior flooded with peace and tranquility. — You give up an attachment, and you gain freedom of heart. You renounce wishes and longings after one or another form of happiness, and a joy of which you never could have formed the least idea, flows in on you like a torrent. —You consent to be nothing, if the Lord so ordains, and He takes delight in putting into your hands a power, and placing you into some sphere of work altogether unlooked-for.

All these are only the common and ordinary issue of that death to which the little grain of wheat at last submits.

It has fallen into its little furrow and there dies.—The winter passes with its frost and bitter cold, and spring dawns at last, and lo! the green blade appears, and then the tender shoot; after that the full ear and the abundant hundred-fold.

All we need is courage and confidence. May the Lord of the harvest give us these

through the powerful intercession of our blessed Mother and St. Joseph.

Colloquy with St. Ignatius.—Recite with him his beautiful prayer "Receive O Lord, my memory, will and understanding, etc."*

THIRD MEDITATION.

The Renovation of Vows is most pleasing to God and highly beneficial to ourselves.

First Prelude: Recall to your mind the joyful day of your religious profession, and the happiness you then experienced, in being permitted to pronounce your holy vows and to consecrate yourself forever to the service of God.

Second Prelude: Humbly implore the grace to fully appreciate your great happiness and fervently thank God for it every day of your life.

I. POINT.

The renovation of our holy vows suggests the idea of a complete renewal of ourselves in the service of God. Let our memory recall and dwell on the various circumstances of that joyous morning, when in the happy spring time of our religious life we

* This Meditation has, in part, been extracted from "Spiritual Notes" by Mother Frances Raphael.

knelt as expectant brides at the foot of God's Altar, ready to pour forth our vows to our heavenly Bridegroom. O how ready we were then, for everything—for any sacrifice that the Beloved of our souls might be pleased to demand of us! What were we not prepared to do and to suffer!

We may probably not then have realized the cost of the sacrifice, we so joyfully made; for when our Lord's sweet and powerful grace is sensibly present with us, it is easy enough to make any offering, and deposit the victim upon the altar of God's love.

But to consume that victim must be our daily, life-long occupation; and this costs, and costs much—perhaps more than we had ever anticipated. Virtue has to be practiced heroically in this constant immolation of self, and we stand a fair chance of becoming saints, provided we grow not faint-hearted, and turn back.

This Triduum, so providentially ordained and prescribed for us, is to bring about in us a renewal of those holy and fervent dispositions with which, by God's grace, we felt animated, at the moment we pronounced our holy vows.

It is for this end, we should practise greater recollection of mind and heart, observe a stricter silence, and while meditating

on striking truths and principles bearing upon the religious life, endeavor to enter into our interior, humbly examining our past failures, present dispositions and holy aspirations for the future.

Above all, it is by humble, fervent prayer and supplication, that we may hope to put ourselves into a disposition of mind and heart which the Lord looks for in souls, that He wishes to favor with his choicest graces.

May our heavenly Mother obtain for the children of her blessed Spouse, a copious dew of heavenly graces which, falling upon hearts well prepared, may work that happy renewal which Jesus, the Spouse of our souls longs to see accomplished in us.

In bestowing upon us a religious vocation, our Lord planted us in His own vineyard which He describes by the prophet Isaias "with its wine-press, its watch-tower, its hedge of thorns," and each one of us can say to herself: I am the little branch which the Lord Himself planted with His own divine hand in His vineyard, and on which He bestows every possible care. Every help and every privilege has been given me to work out my salvation and to attain to the perfection of my state; and every obstacle has been taken away. "What more," says He by the same prophet, "could I do for my vineyard, that I have not done for it?"

But what has been the fruit? Have I been faithful in corresponding with grace?

There were occasions, perchance, when I felt inclined to sit down to rest in the cool shade of the vine, when I ought to be up and doing, trying to prevent the enemy from breaking down the hedge of the vineyard.

By my sloth and carelessness, I have allowed "little foxes" to break through the hedge who have devoured the blossoms, and in some instances, torn up the roots of the plant. Has it not sometimes happened, that by repeated infidelities, I have rendered my heart callous and insensible to grace, and thus exposed myself to yield more readily to temptations of discouragement and disgust for my holy vocation?

The birds of distraction have come in and made much havoc—self-love, negligence and sloth have caused decay among the few hard and sour grapes produced by the poor little withered branch—Alas! Not one perhaps, fit to give the Master of the vineyard who now stands at the gate to demand the fruit of the little vine, He Himself has planted, and tended with so much care and diligence!

Alas, Lord! I am that little withered branch which Thy own hand hath planted in thy chosen vineyard which thou didst so

often water with Thy own most precious Blood! I have allowed my life to flow away in barrenness. But now, I return to thee with my whole heart, that I may be quickened by thee with restored life, and bloom and flourish again in true holiness.

O most sweet Jesus! I pray thee by the love of Thy own dear Virgin-Mother, and St. Joseph, our glorious patron, that thou wouldst make me observe with scrupulous fidelity the rules of holy religion and the duties of the spiritual life. Enable me to bring forth manifold fruit of virtue, that when Thou shalt come to gather them at the hour of my death, I may appear before Thee with much fruit, in full maturity, consumnate in the perfection Thou dost expect from the children of Thy blessed Foster-father, St. Joseph.

II. POINT.

On the morning of our holy profession, we called the Most Holy Virgin, St. Joseph, our patron, and the whole heavenly Court to witness the sacrifice we then so generously made to our heavenly Spouse. We most solemnly consecrated ourselves to the Divine Majesty, vowing poverty, chastity and obedience, according to the rules of this dear Institute — We promised, by a special pro-

testation, to practice the most profound humility in all things and the most cordial charity towards our neighbor:—thus engaging ourselves by the conspicuous and persevering practice of these two virtues, to distinguish ourselves in the Church of God, as true daughters of St. Joseph.

Before we took our vows, we were free to follow the dictates of our own will, free from the obligations of constantly tending to perfection; but being once professed, there is upon us a sacred obligation, not only to lead a life of poverty, chastity and obedience, but also in practice to aspire continually to the perfection of these virtues.

As christians we ought, in obedience to our Lord's exhortation, "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart" to have cherished the virtues of humility and charity; but having once so solemnly engaged ourselves to practice them, how great are our obligations in this respect! In fact, we can only pretend to the right of bearing the name, and to the honor of being recognized in the Church as children of St. Joseph, in proportion to the manner in which we exercise ourselves in these two virtues.

What has been our aim during the past? Have we edified the world by a love of self-abnegation and penance? Have we never

caused it to contemn religion, on account of our haughtiness and want of humble forbearance? Have we never scandalized it by our want of modesty and reserve? Is not the veil of the virgin consecrated to God, the image of modesty? Modesty is that array of precaution, vigilance, mortification, which, so to say, envelopes and preserves holy purity. If we would be chaste, let us be modest. Or, have we perhaps, been a trial—a stumbling-block—a cause of sorrow in the community which numbered us amongst its members? If perchance, our weakness has gained the mastery over us, let it be so no longer; but with humility and compunction of heart, let us ask our sweet Saviour to receive us into the abyss of His tender mercy, to wash us from the stains contracted by our past transgressions, in the great deep of His compassion, and to receive us again into the tender embrace of His love, that by our renovation of vows we may become united to Him anew by an indissoluble bond.

Let us ask our heavenly Father, the King of kings, that He may again consummate within us, the espousals of His Son and the Divine Paraclete, unite our hearts to Jesus forevermore in that bond of love, whereby He unites the Father and the Son.

Let us, likewise turn to our compassionate Mother and implore of her bounty, that she may graciously renew within us, by the chastity of our hearts and all of our senses, our espousals with her Son, Jesus.

And that we may the more worthily celebrate this renewal, let us supplicate our beloved patron St. Joseph, to give us a share in his humility and charity—the holy angels a share in their purity — the holy patriarchs and prophets part in their ardent longings—the holy Apostles in their zealous labors—the holy martyrs a share in their courageous, patient sufferings — the holy confessors in the finished beauty of their holiness and the holy virgins part in their chaste and tender affection for their heavenly Bridegroom.

O how greatly interested are all the Saints of God in this renewal of ourselves in the service of God! All are most willing and ready to give us the aid of their assistance, their powerful intercession with God. Let us ask them, therefore, that all of us who, by God's infinite mercy, have been admitted to this holy Institute, may, for the short span of our life yet granted us, love and serve our Lord with our whole heart, so that, at the hour of our death, we may be permitted to go forth to meet Him with the

Wise Virgins, even as the bride goeth forth to meet the bridegroom, adorned with the wedding garment, and having our lamps trimmed and bright.

III. POINT.

On the day of our religious profession, we were received among the number of the consecrated spouses of Jesus Christ, and as such, we are bound to labor for His honor and glory.

His loving Providence deigned to place us in an Institute which has a special work to do — a special end to fulfil in His holy Church. And this end can only be attained by the perfect fidelity of each religious belonging to the Institute, to the work assigned to her by holy obedience. What, therefore, must be the importance of each one striving to do her duty — to do it individually — to do it entirely — to do it well! Do we conceive, that there is upon each one of us a strict obligation to acquire a thorough knowledge of our duty? For without knowing, we can never expect to do the thing. To what school of wisdom shall we apply for instruction? Our Constitutions tell us, and they point out the way we must take, the road we must follow, the spirit which ought to annimate us, and the models we must imitate, if we desire to carry out

our Lord's designs, in planting the little Institute of St. Joseph in the garden of His holy Church.

Each and every one of us is in duty bound to take a true and personal interest in the works of the Congregation, and without choosing any special part thereof for herself, each one should strive to be ever ready to do that, appointed to her by her Superior who represents our Lord to her. We are all one body of which Jesus Christ is the head; and, being happily planted upon the rock of Peter, we are known before men as the children of the head of the Holy Family. If, faithfully carrying out the works prescribed by the rules of our Institute, and carrying them out in the manner and with the intentions laid down in them, we may confidently hope that our Lord will be satisfied with us, and acknowledge us as His own before His heavenly Father. Does our conscience bear us the consoling testimony that we have always labored zealously for the perfection of *regular observance?* It constitutes the glory of the house of God. It gives so much pleasure to the Lord, joy to the angels and terror to the demons. It builds up a strong wall of defense against the spirits of wickedness, is a comfort to the Church of God and the edification of the faithful.

Are we accustomed to look at our Institute as the work—not of man but of God—whose honor and glory it behooves us to uphold by every means in our power? We shall do so in proportion as we are humble and charitable. These two virtues are set forth by the Constitutions as the true characteristics of our dear Congregation. If, therefore, I find myself proud, haughty, arrogant, ever on the lookout for my rights, ever ready to excuse and palliate my faults, I am far from being a daughter of St. Joseph. If I am selfish, seek my own ease and convenience to the discomfort of others, refuse little services to others, am harsh in my judgments of the defects of my neighbor, if I am given to detraction and discussing the faults of others, and am cold and insensible to my neighbor's sufferings, I can have no claim whatever to the cherished title of child of St. Joseph.

Let us, in view of past failings and defective dispositions, strive to humble ourselves in God's holy presence and ask of Him to send down upon us His Holy Spirit that He may renew within us an ardent desire of perfection and the love of the spiritual life.

O Jesus, Thou only life and light of our souls! Kindle within us evermore the glowing lamp of Thy love. Teach us to keep our holy vows faithfully, walking without re-

proach in union of heart and will: giving to our Superiors the strong support of our respectful love and loyalty, and the comfort of a ready obedience and fidelity to Rule: thus contributing, as far as lies in us, to the strength and unity of the dear Institute to which, in Thy tender mercy, Thou didst call us.

O most holy and Immaculate Virgin! cast upon us a look of thy tender mercy, and by thy powerful intercession obtain that this renewal of our holy vows may work in us a great hatred of sin and true compunction of heart; that it may bring about the satisfaction for all our negligences and our return to the life we had lost: that it may be the enlargement of our love and the establishment of our life in Jesus forevermore.

Pray thy beloved Son that it may be the cleansing of our whole life, work in us a perfect liberty of spirit, and a noble generosity in all good works. May it be within us the triumph of humility and an effectual aid towards final perseverance.

O Virgin, Mother of God, and our Mother! encompass us during this mortal life with thy tender, compassionate care, and receive us into thy maternal bosom at the hour of our death. Amen.

Colloquy with Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Meditation

For the Feast of St. Francis de Sales.

INTRODUCTION.

From the foundation of the Institute of St. Joseph, our Congregation has ever cherished a special devotion to the blessed Founder of the Visitation of Holy Mary; and history demonstrates that the original design which this admirable saint had planned for the first foundation of the Visitandines, is none other, than the one adopted by our venerated Founders in the establishment of the Sisters of St. Joseph at Puy.

Since, then, there exists so holy and strong a relationship between the saintly Bishop of Geneva and the daughters of St. Joseph, who were destined by Providence to take up, and carry out in practice, what he had planned amidst careful study, earnest meditation and fervent supplications in God's holy presence, we should endeavor to strengthen and intensify the same by cultivating a special love for, and devotion to this gentle and amiable Saint who seems to be the very personification of the sweet and

strong virtues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We should do so especially by entering into the spirit and animating principle he has labored so earnestly to instill into his beloved Institute of the Visitation—the spirit of sweetness and gentleness of the virtues of humility and charity.

Let us, therefore, in this meditation on the life and virtues of St. Francis de Sales, in the *first prelude*, picture to ourselves the Saint raised in heavenly glory surrounded by his spiritual children, and in the *second prelude*, ask him for a share in that sweetness and gentleness which enabled him to conquer so many obstinate hearts, and gain so many precious souls to God.

I. POINT.

God never makes two things alike. It is one of the privileges of Omnipotence to show that, in adhering to the laws which It has itself created, It is still the Master of those laws. We, on the other hand, usually play the part of a machine. We can but repeat ourselves, and be the precise copyists of our own feebly-conceived and defectively-executed originals.

But He who created the world, and the laws within whose limits we toil, is as infinitely varied in the details of His works, as

those works themselves are infinite in number. The stars differ from one another in glory. Of the uncounted variety of flowers not two are alike. Every feature in nature is unlike any other. Such is the abyss of God's infinite wisdom, in the creation of the universe.

The same mysterious variety is found to prevail in the order of grace, as well as in that of nature. This shows itself especially among the saints of God.

But, when we turn to the actual lives of the saints, is it not striking to find how often it has happened that many of them had never been suspected to be saints, even by the general run of catholics? Some of their extraordinary graces have been known to so few, that it may be said they were almost wholly unknown. Accordingly, as far as externals are concerned, they varied from one another in the same variety which prevails among those that are not saints. But as to their interior gifts of grace, how great their diversity!

This is a result of that boundless variety which exists in the natural characters which God, in His impenetrable wisdom has given to each one individually.

There are among the saints those to whom the faithful, by tens of thousands pray

daily, while others are honored by a devout rule rather, than by personal choice of the individual christian. We all have our favorite saints. It is as difficult to say, why we prefer to have recourse to one, rather than to another, as it is hard to say, why we enjoy the society of one person, in preference to that of another. But so it is, and so it will be, as long as the world lasts, and both the saints, and we who honor them, remain as we are.

The Saint whom the Church honors this day, seems to be one of the "favorite Saints." There appears in St. Francis de Sales that union of sweetness and strength — of manly power and feminine delicacy — of profound knowledge and practical dexterity which constitute a character, at once formed to win, and subdue minds of almost every type and age. As the rose among flowers, so is he among saints. From the thorny, woody fibre of the brier comes forth that blossom which unites all that can make a flower lovely and attractive; and from the hot, vehement nature of the young Saint, came a spiritual flower of extraordinary beauty and exquisite fragrance.

A lover of gentle means in an age of persecution — a spiritual guide who could conduct souls with the reverent delicacy of

a true mystic and the piercing shrewdness of a man of the world, he still lives by his many works of charity and piety—still lives by his truly admirable writings which, in the Church, are held in the highest esteem to be the accepted as the safest, most satisfying, and most profound teacher of that heavenly wisdom which is revealed to all the saints, but given to few to communicate with the fulness, sweetness and beauty, with which it ever flows from his blessed lips, and easy pen.

II. POINT.

What a wonderful Saint was St. Francis de Sales! How well-balanced were all his mental and physical qualities! His intellectual and spiritual powers were capable of attaining the highest perfection. Yet, we must not think that although, his path was full of light, he was not tempted and tried like other men.

While quite a young student at Paris, our Saint was severely harassed by a temptation to despair, from which, after six weeks duration, he was miraculously delivered, after having earnestly besought the aid of the Blessed Virgin, before an altar consecrated to her. Having been born during the Octave of the Assumption of the Blessed

Virgin, he had always a peculiar devotion towards her. From his tenderest years, he sought to honor her, both by special suffrages and by a singular love of purity, consecrating himself by a vow of perpetual virginity under the protection and aid of this Queen of Virgins. He received Episcopal Consecration on the feast of the Immaculate Conception and during this holy ceremony, the gift of that interior unction for which he was so much noted.

Indeed, there was nothing that the Saint so strongly recommended to his spiritual children, as devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

Condescension to the humors of others, and the sweet, but most reasonable endurance of our neighbor, were the cherished and special virtues of this dear Saint; and he was constantly recommending them to his children, often saying to them: "O how much shorter work it is to accommodate ourselves to others, than to wish to bend every one to our own humors and opinions!" We must condescend in everything, where God is not offended or less honored.

A little gentleness, moderation and modesty, he said, are sufficient for this purpose. When conversing with our neighbor, we ought to take pleasure in it, and show that we do so; and when we are alone, we must

take pleasure in our solitude. We ought to cultivate an even and reasonable temper of mind delighting in our various occupations, such as prayer, recreation, silence, work—each at its proper time. Thus we may say with the prophet: "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall be ever in my mouth."

His beautiful soul ever bore the stamp of that serenity which, one may say, was his distinguishing characteristic. Though of a naturally quick temper, he had learned to possess his soul in peace. This constant, blessed serenity is the perpetual blue sky of the soul, and indicates the presence of the Lord who, as its true Sun, deigns to illuminate it, and diffusing its rays abroad.

Very strong souls are generally serene. What produces excitement, passion and disturbance is not strength, but weakness. It is the overflow of some human, immortified element. But the majestic strength of this most gentle of Saints had that stamp of serenity and sweetness, which likened him to the Angels of God. Nay, it was even remarked by those that knew him best, that no one reminded them so much of the Son of God conversing among men here on earth, as the Saint in his aspect, the sweetness of his expression — even the tone of

his voice, the grace of his movements, his actions and behavior among those with whom he conversed.

We are all probably conscious of the great power which a calm tranquillity and serenity of manner exert over us. What confidence do they not inspire! What influence for good! With teachers a calm serenity of manner, a sweet graciousness of expression, are the qualities which most impose on children, and give command.

May our beloved Saint give us a share in his gentle, yet strong and vigorous spirit which enabled him to do so much for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. May he obtain for us the spirit of the sweet and tender charity of the Heart of Jesus, from which he himself had imbibed so large a share.

Possessed of this spirit we shall be blessed indeed. It will most admirably order everything within us, and help us to succeed wonderfully in our labors for the salvation of souls.

How admirable are the operations of God in His Saints! Let us give humble thanks for having, in the plans of Divine Providence, become so closely allied to so great and amiable a Saint, by being chosen, in spite of our unworthiness, to carry out in

our lives and actions the cherished design of his devoted and faithful heart.

III. POINT.

The whole life of St. Francis was one of ceaseless activity, heroic efforts in conquering obstacles, and grand success in assuring the salvation of souls. He had the mind of an ascetic, and the heart and soul of a true apostle of Jesus Christ. He was a most courageous missionary and powerful champion of the Church of God.

Who, like him, could have undertaken and carried on with such fearless determination and success the apostolate of the Chablais, to bring back to the true faith the seventy thousand souls, whom the sin of heresy had forcibly torn from the bosom of Holy Mother Church?

How did he manage amidst all this constant activity, to find leisure to give that sweet and gracious attention, so usual with him, to innumerable people who applied to him for advice and instruction, or who came for pecuniary assistance? — He drew his strength from prayer.—Humble, persevering, fervent prayer was the secret of his extraordinary success.

How do we apply to prayer? Is it perseveringly made, in spite of great obstacles?—

Are we convinced of our own unworthiness, and do we chiefly depend on the goodness and mercy of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ? Let us have recourse to this loving Saint—he will teach us how to pray. He does so, in fact, by his sacred writings which merited for him the title of Doctor of the Church. His method of prayer is placed before us in the Formulary of our Community prayers, which we should often read over at our leisure. Do we diligently study it, and appropriate it to ourselves? And how far have we succeeded during the past? Is there no room for improvement in the future?

Speaking of devotion, the Saint used to say, that it was a gentle and tranquil fervor, while eagerness is an indiscreet and turbulent bubble, which pulls down, while it thinks to build up. Although he possessed the most eminent virtues, nevertheless, he had a tender love for the smallest, that is for those which appear such before men; for he was accustomed to say, there were none, especially of the infused, which were not great before God. All occupations, great or small, were equal to our Saint, provided they concerned God's service.

A remarkable saying of his, concerning charity towards our neighbor, was this:

The soul of our neighbor is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which we are forbidden to touch under pain of chastisement; because God has reserved the judgment thereof to Himself. — He observed an inconsistency common among men, who are by nature inclined to judge in a matter, wherein they are ignorant, namely the interior of others: while they are averse to judging of what they do know, or ought to know — namely, their own interior. The first is forbidden, the second is commanded. He gave it as a rule, that if an act may be viewed in a hundred different lights, to always look at it in the fairest. In short it was the opinion of this most gentle and charitable of Saints, that those who keep a faithful watch over their own conscience, will seldom, or never sin by rash judgments or in any other way, detrimental to their neighbor.

Colloquy with St. Francis.

Meditation

For the Feast of St. Teresa of Jesus.

INTRODUCTION.

How truly admirable are the ways of God in His providential guidance of human events, for the execution of His adorable designs!

St. Teresa, the Seraphic Virgin of Carmel, who was so great a client of the dear Foster-father of our Lord, and — we may say, the Apostle of the devotion to St. Joseph during her life-time — was the first one in Spain who dedicated churches and convents in his honor: and in less than a century afterwards, her own feast is honored by the celebration of an event, which, had she still been an inhabitant of this world, would have filled her loving heart with the sweetest joy, and the most heartfelt gratitude.

On the 15th of October 1650, the chapel of the Orphanage of the City of Le Puy, France, was the scene of a religious ceremony that was celebrated to illustrate, and reflect great glory on the Saint she loved with such singular affection, namely, the

clothing with the religious habit of a select number of chosen souls, who were henceforth to be known as the Daughters of the little Institute of St. Joseph.

May we not piously believe that, from her high place in heaven, the seraphic Virgin, Teresa of Jesus, was present at the ceremony, and rejoiced at the new honor thus given to the great Saint whom the Eternal Wisdom had chosen to be the reputed Father of the Incarnate Word, and whom she had ever cherished as her most beloved Patron? Will she not especially interest herself in our behalf, bearing as we do, the name of him so much cherished during her lifetime, and for the advancement of whose honor she labored so efficiently here on earth. The feast of St. Teresa being the birthday of our Congregation is, therefore, for each one of us, who have been called to this blessed Institute, the beginning of a long chain of graces and blessings, which we shall never be able to sufficiently understand or appreciate. It ought to be for us a day of special thanksgiving for the grace of vocation and all that this means to us — a day of joy and gladness, at having been chosen without any merit on our part, to follow the Lord more closely, and to serve Him more faithfully than the common run

of christians.—May we, during this meditation on the life and virtues of the glorious Virgin of Carmel, enter deeply into her sweet spirit of thankfulness, which all through her writings manifests itself in a thousand endearing expressions of grateful love. She will teach us how to pray, how to labor, and how to suffer for the glory of the Beloved.

First Prelude: Imagine you see the Saint on her death-bed, surrounded by her spiritual children who are carefully treasuring up the words and actions of the dying Saint—especially these words which she repeats again and again: "After all, O Lord, I am a child of the Holy Catholic Church!" and these words of the Prophet-King: "A contrite and humble heart, O Lord, Thou wilt not despise."

Second Prelude: Implore the Saint to obtain for you a share in her generous love for her heavenly Spouse, that you may learn from her how to pray, to labor and to suffer for God.

I. POINT.

What was it that obtained for St. Teresa such immense treasures of grace, such ardor of love, such strength in overcoming obstacles in the way of virtue. It was prayer—faithful perseverance in prayer.

There is perhaps no Saint so singularly adapted, or so well qualified to teach this holy science, as this highly privileged Virgin. No one, seemingly, had so many, and such varied opportunities to acquire a practical knowledge of its difficulties, trials, aridities, temptations of abandoning the same, and finally resuming its practice and persevering therein, till reaching the most exalted heights of contemplation.

One could scarcely find anyone so upright and translucent in the communication of her difficulties and shortcomings to her spiritual directors—who sought instruction from them so eagerly, and who followed the same more conscientiously or with greater exactitude, than our Saint; and by this, she, no doubt, deserved to make such wonderful progress in prayer, and to be instructed in this sacred science by our Lord Himself.

From her earliest childhood, St. Teresa seemed to possess the gift of prayer which was fostered and encouraged by her thoroughly Catholic parents. What prompted the flight of the dear child, at the age of seven, to go into Africa with her little brother, in order to obtain there the grace of martyrdom? Was it not the gift of prayer? She had been meditating on the words "Ever and never" and having read in the

lives of the Saints of the glorious victories of the martyrs who died for the faith, and who had thus assured unto themselves an everlasting reward, the dear little ones could not refrain from wishing to walk in their footsteps, so as to gain a like recompense.

What happiness for children to have good Catholic parents who attach importance to the things of God—of eternity:—who teach their little ones, how to pray, how to meditate, how to draw practical conclusions from the consideration of Catholic truth!

We religious, having the care of orphans, or the education of children placed in our charge, may consider here our golden opportunity for moulding the character and forming the dispositions of the precious little souls confided to us by our Lord. What matchless good seed may we not sow in the hearts of these little ones! The careful early training of St. Teresa was the precious seed, that laid the foundation of her future sanctity.

There is nothing which St. Teresa recommends to us so strongly, as perseverance—courageous perseverance in prayer in spite of obstacles.—By it, she tells us, we assure our salvation—but without it, we shall be lost.

O prayer, how dost thou exalt the soul of the glorious Virgin of Carmel, detach it

from the earth and from self and reveal to her the secrets of the kingdom of Jesus Christ! May I ever cherish thee and persevere in thee to the end!

Yes, Lord! St. Teresa literally accomplished these words of Thy Apostle: "Our conversation is in heaven." Her life was hidden with Jesus Christ in God. I do not aspire to the sublimity of her prayer.—But, do thou, dear Saint, so rich in merits gained in prayer, obtain for me the prayer of faith and love, that I may be so closely united to Jesus in all my actions, as never to lose sight of the beloved of my heart.

II. POINT.

St. Teresa seems to have been raised up in these latter times to console the Church for the rebellion of her children. She received special lights upon the truths assailed by heretics; she read them in the very light of God, and spoke of them with an eloquence which was like the voice of God.

Is it not wonderful that a simple nun should have written so fully upon such sublime subjects, without a word escaping her which could be censured by the severest criticism? Teresa was guided by prayer, and the Spirit of God guarded her from all danger. The sublime faith which was His

gift extended not only to the mysteries of religion, it instructed her also in all the secrets of the interior life. It taught her what God is to a soul full of good will, and what such a soul is to God; it unfolded to her all the consequences of her religious profession, all the degrees of perfection, all the various ways in which God is pleased to guide a soul, all the illusions which spring from self-love or from the malice of the evil one. The Saint learned all these lessons in prayer; prayer was the school of faith, and faith the reward of prayer.

May we not consider our want of faith as the fruit of our coldness in prayer? Ah! if we but gave ourselves to prayer, faith would revive in our soul; faith would control our senses; faith would conquer our pusillanimity; and all our judgments of the world, and all that the world esteems would be conformed to the judgment of our Lord, the author of our faith. Our vocal prayers, now often so cold, so hurried, and so fruitless, would be clothed with the intelligence of faith and invested with new beauty. Our conversations would bear upon them the stamp and the seal of faith, and show forth the sweetness and charity of Christ. Had St. Teresa not been a child of prayer, her faith would have been weak, closely

bordering upon that dead faith which leads to perdition. Faith led the Saint to prayer, and prayer perfected her faith.

O prayer of faith! O faith nourished by prayer! How gloriously do you shine forth in the life of the Seraphic Virgin of Carmel!

Give me, O Lord, through the intercession of this blessed Saint the spirit of prayer, that I may believe, and the spirit of faith, that I may pray. Give me also a share in her ardent love of, and confidence in, Thy ever-blessed Mother and the glorious St. Joseph, her beloved Patron.

When losing her mother, at the age of twelve, Thou, O sweet Jesus, didst inspire this child of benediction with so lively, and tender a devotion to Thy blessed Mother, as to attach her throughout life, most intimately to her service. At her altars, she conceived the plan of her reform, and under her auspices, and St. Joseph's protection, she carried it out. She transmitted the same devotion to our Lady and her blessed Spouse to her beloved children of Carmel, as a most precious inheritance.

III. POINT.

"Either to suffer or to die," was the watchword of the Virgin of Carmel. For the most part in ill health, her life was a

succession of crosses and sufferings, which faithfully accompanied her, even to the end. Sufferings, the Saint ever considered as the most precious portion of the children of God. Enlightened by faith, she beheld with sorrow the fearful ravages which the then prevailing and rising heresies wrought in the Church, and, touched to the heart, at seeing the injured glory of her heavenly Spouse, and the loss of so many thousands of souls, she willingly undertakes the painful, trying and very laborious task of restoring the ancient splendors of Carmel in her own Order —which task implied the entire sacrifice of self, a thousand times over—painful humiliations, persecutions, disappointments, labors and journeyings, and crosses of all kinds. She longed, with all the ardor of her generous heart to repair, as far as lay in her power, the outraged glory of God, and the honor of His Bride, the Church, who was being so grossly insulted, and so ignominiously maltreated by the heretics of her day, and for this end, she desired to found new convents, after the ancient strictness of discipline, wherein the Lord would be dedoutly served, and whose inmates would pray unceasingly for the defenders of the faith—for the priests and missionaries of the Church who were zealously promoting

its interests at home, among heretics; or abroad, among pagan nations to bring them to a knowledge of the truth.

How well she succeeded, and of the trials under which her work was accomplished, history tells us. It also tells us that, not only did her reform affect her own Order, but likewise all the Orders of the Church of God, chiefly those of Spain — her own country.

Thus, the aspirations and modest efforts of an humble nun—a religious poor in the goods of earth and worldly credit, but rich in virtue and heavenly desires, are crowned with a success, it would have been difficult to conceive or anticipate.

Where did St. Teresa obtain that superhuman courage which sustained her in the labors and contradictions accompanying the reform? She found it in prayer—in her union with God whom she sought and found in prayer. Prayer was the foundation of her work, the source of her illuminations, the armory whence she derived the weapons to defend herself against her enemies. She rose from prayer to confront the difficulties in her path, as the martyrs went forth from prayer to tortures and death.

She roused the hearts of men to aid her, and quickened them with her own energy.

Toilsome journeys, dissentions within, opposition without, the human prudence of friends and directors, earth and hell arrayed against her. — All were alike impotent to dismay or discourage this wonderful Saint.

From St. Teresa let us learn devotion to the Church — let us love the apostolate of souls whose loss she deplored with an ever-increasing sorrow and compassion, and to save whom she would willingly have endured torments and death. Who inspired her with this ardent love of souls? It was, because by the light of faith she recognized in them the image and likeness of God which is obscured by sin, especially by mortal sin.

"O souls!" the Saint cries out, "souls, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ! Know and pity yourselves! How is it possible that, knowing this truth, as you do, you do not endeavor to take away the black pitch of sin with which this beautiful, bright crystal of your soul is covered! Consider, when once your life is ended, you will never return any more to enjoy this light."

Addressing her sisters she says: — "Let us take particular care, to pray for those in mortal sin; it is a very great charity. If we saw a christian with his hands bound behind him with a strong chain, and tied fast to a pillar, and dying with hunger—not

through want of victuals, having every delicacy before him, but because he cannot reach them and that he was about to die, not a temporal, but an eternal death: would it not be a great cruelty to stand looking on, and not give him anything to eat? But what if, by your prayers, his chains also could be loosened? For the love of God, I beg of you always to remember such souls in your prayers."

Considering our holy vocation to the Institute of St. Joseph, whose object is to foster in our various duties and employments, the apostolate of souls, let us rejoice in being thus associated with the aims and intentions of the Virgin of Carmel and her faithful children. They are carrying on a most fruitful apostolate by a life of strict seclusion, penance, and constant, fervent prayer and supplication; and we, by uniting the duties of Mary and Martha—joining the zealous labors of the latter to the recollection and prayer of the former—after the example of our Lord and His Apostles.

O great St. Teresa, chosen Spouse of Our Lord! Thou art the cherished daughter of the Virgin Mother of God, the joy and the glory of the Carmelite Order! Thou art a teacher in the school of prayer, the pattern of contemplatives and a model of religious

decorum! Intercede for the children of St. Joseph.

O Seraph of divine love! whose heart was pierced with the flaming dart from the hand of an angel, preserve us by thy holy intercession from all sin and from the illusions and snares of the devil, from sloth in the interior life, and from all hardness of heart. Obtain peace for our holy Mother the Church, and for heretics and unbelievers the gift of true faith. Implore the grace of conversion for poor sinners; and for us, O holy Mother St. Teresa, obtain the spirit and the love of prayer, an ardent love of God, the pardon of our sins, and the grace of final perseverance.

Devotions and Meditations

for the

Novena Preparatory for the Feast of Pentecost.

Conformably to our Constitutions, let us spend the prescribed extra half hour each day of this Novena in fervent prayer, to honor the Holy Spirit, who is the principle of all graces; and to do so more perfectly, let us unite ourselves with our Blessed Mother and the holy Apostles and Disciples in the Supper-Room, and implore through their powerful intercession, a large share in the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost.

Begin the Meditation by reciting or chanting the "Veni Creator" with versicle and prayer of the Church.

Some of the following prayers may be recited at the conclusion of the Meditation.

O Spirit of Wisdom, preside over all my thoughts, words and actions, from this hour, till the moment of my death.

Spirit of Understanding, enlighten and teach me.

Spirit of Counsel, direct my inexperience.

Spirit of Fortitude, strengthen my weakness.

Spirit of Knowledge, instruct my ignorance.

Spirit of Piety, make me fervent in good works.

Spirit of Fear, restrain me from all evil.

O Spirit of Peace, give me Thy peace; make me persevere in the service of God; enable me to act on all occasions with goodness and benignity, patience, charity and joy, long-suffering, mildness, and fidelity. Let the heavenly virtues of modesty, continence and chastity adorn the temple Thou hast chosen for Thy abode. O Spirit of Holiness, by Thy all powerful grace, preserve my soul from the misfortune of sin. Amen.

An Oblation to the Holy Ghost.

On my knees, before the great cloud of witnesses, I offer myself soul and body to Thee, eternal Spirit of God. I adore the brightness of Thy purity, the unerring keenness of Thy justice, and the might of Thy love.

Thou art the strength and light of my soul. I desire never to grieve Thee by un-

faithfulness to grace, and I pray with all my heart to be kept from the smallest sin against Thee. Make me faithful in every thought; and grant that I may always listen to Thy voice, and watch for Thy light and follow Thy gracious inspirations. I cling to Thee, and give myself to Thee, and ask Thee, by Thy compassion to watch over me in my weakness. Holding the pierced feet of Jesus, and looking at His five wounds, and trusting to His precious Blood, and adoring His opened Side and stricken Heart, I implore Thee, adorable Spirit so to keep me in Thy grace, that I may never sin against Thee with the sin Thou canst not forgive. Give me grace, O Holy Ghost, Spirit of the Father and the Son, to say to Thee always and everywhere, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

Prayer to the Holy Ghost.

O Divine breathing of the Holy Spirit, make Thyself felt in my soul; awaken it from the lethargy in which it lies: shake off the languor in which it is sunk; bear away the dust that adheres to all I do; work in me every change that Thou knowest to be necessary to me, O divine Paraclete; give me one of those tongues of light, of charity, of perfection, which descended on the Apostles,

that I may thereby bless Thy name, confess my sins, teach with love, answer with meekness, be silent when becoming, and edify in all things. And you, O holy Apostles, who on the solemn day of Pentecost did receive unto fulness the spirit of unity and sanctity, obtain for us also so signal a gift, that, believing all the truths that you have taught, practising all the works that you have recommended, living and dying in the Church which you have founded, I may attain with you the blessed and eternal recompense which you have taught us to ask and hope. Amen.

Another Prayer to the Holy Ghost.

O Holy Ghost, father of the poor and comforter of the afflicted, come and descend upon us. Illumine us with Thy light, govern us with Thy wisdom, sanctify us by Thy love, animate us with Thy grace, sustain us with Thy strength, penetrate us with Thy unction, adopt us as sons by Thy charity, make us peaceful by Thy presence, save us by Thy infinite mercy, and lift us up from earth to heaven, that we may praise Thee, bless Thee, and love Thee for all eternity. Amen.

Hymn to the Holy Ghost.

O Paraclete, whom Jesus sent to me
Who, one with Him didst give Thyself to me,
Thou Love of God Most High, who lovest me,
Thou King and Lord, who sweetly drawest me,
For life, and light and love I come to Thee.

From Father and from Son proceedest Thou;
Of Father and of Son the Love art Thou;
Their Kiss of everlasting peace art Thou;
The Bond unbroken of their rest art Thou;
One God with Father and with Son art Thou.

My soul is dark and helpless without Thee;
My heart is weak and withered without Thee;
My life is burnt like stubble without Thee;
I cannot say "My Jesus" without Thee;
O loved One, pour Thy living light on me.

I come to Thee, Almighty, living One,
In poverty of soul, O Living One;
In sinfulness and death, O Living One;
O make my spirit Thine, Thou living One,
And be Thou mine, Thou ever Living One.

For sorrow for my sins I come to Thee;
For confidence in God I come to Thee;
For faithfulness to grace I come to Thee;
To keep, O Love, my promises to Thee,
And walk in white with Jesus and with Thee.

A Wind rain-laden from the South art Thou;
The Dew that falleth in the night art Thou;
A Fountain in the desert land art Thou;
A flame-girt Citadel of strength art Thou;
The fiery Furnace of God's love art Thou.

O Spirit of my Lord, who lightest me,
Thou who didst come at Pentecost to me,
Thou Love, who seekest thirstingly for me,
Burn up all evil and all death in me,
And make my heart a holiness to Thee.

O Gift of Jesus crucified, O Love,
Send down Thy showers upon Thy fields, O Love,
Fill all the valleys with Thy corn, O Love,
And girdle all the hills with joy, O Love,
O First and Last, O uncreated Love.

Thou stoopest in Thy deathless Love to me,
Thou fillest all the house of God for me,
Thou crownest all the years with grace for me;
Long-suffering Spirit, how I cling to Thee,
And love and bless and praise and worship Thee!

My Jesus gave himself in death by Thee,
A spotless Sacrifice to God by Thee;
O perfect all Thy gifts and fruits in me,
That, crowned and sceptered, I may dwell in Thee
White-robed, palm-bearing, in the Light with Thee.

Contemplation on the glorious Ascension of Our Lord.

For the Feast of the Ascension.

(Taken from St. Bonaventure.)

First Prelude: Imagine yourself on Mount Olivet in the presence of the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles and Disciples.

Second Prelude: Ask, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and Apostles and Disciples for the spirit of detachment from the things of this world.

I. POINT.

On the fortieth day after His resurrection our Lord Jesus, knowing that His time was now come to depart from this world, and to pass hence to His Father, taking with Him the holy patriarchs, prophets and others, who after His resurrection were in the terrestrial paradise; and blessing Enoch and Elias, who remained there still alive, he came to His Apostles who were gathered together on Mount Sion, which was the place where He made His last supper the night before His passion. There were likewise with the Apostles at this

place, the Blessed Virgin, and many other disciples; and our Lord appearing to them, said that He would eat with them before He departed from them, as a special token and memorial of the love He bore them. And as they were all eating, being full of joy and spritual comfort at this last refection of our Lord Jesus, He said to them, "The time is now come in which I must return to Him that sent me; but you shall remain in the city till you are clothed with the virtue descending from above; for within a few days you shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, as I before promised you. After which you shall de dispersed throughout the whole world, to preach my gospel, baptising all that shall believe in me; so that you shall be my witnesses to the utmost confines of the earth." He likewise reproved them for their incredulity in not believing those who had seen him rise, that is the angels.

This He chose to do at the time He was speaking to them of preaching His gospel, to give them to understand that they ought to have believed the angels, even before they saw Him, much sooner than they ought to be believed by those to whom they were to preach, who nevertheless, would believe them, though they should not see Him. This He did, that by knowing their

fault, they might be humble; showing them at His departure how much he admired that virtue, and that He recommended it to them in a singular manner. And what can we think of His blessed Mother? May we not devoutly imagine, that, sitting near Him, and hearing what He said concerning His departure, she was moved with the tenderness of her motherly affection? But our Blessed Lord endeavored to comfort her and said: "Grieve not, O beloved parent, at my leaving you, because I go to my Father; and it is expedient that you remain here a short time longer, to confirm in their faith, such as shall be converted and believe in me, and afterwards I will come again, and take you with me, to be a partaker of my glory." To whom again our Lady replied: "My beloved son, may Thy will always be fulfilled in all things, for I am not only contented to remain here during Thy pleasure, but to suffer death for love of those souls, for which Thou hast so willingly laid down Thy life; this, however, I beseech Thee, be Thou ever mindful of me." Our Lord then again comforted her, with the disciples and Mary Magdalen, saying, "Let not your hearts be troubled, nor fear ye anything; I will not leave you desolate; I go, but will shortly return again to you, and will remain always with you."

At length, He bid them remove from thence, and go to Mount Olivet, because from that place He would ascend into Heaven, in the presence of them all: — saying this, he disappeared. His holy Mother, with the rest of the company, hastened to the said mount, about a mile distant from Jerusalem, as He had appointed, where our Lord soon again appeared to them. Behold, on this day we have two different apparitions of our Lord. Thus, being all together, our Lord embraced His holy Mother, and she, again embraced Him in a most tender manner, taking leave of each other. And the disciples, Mary Magdalen and the rest, falling down to the ground, and weeping with tenderness, kissed His blessed feet, and He, raising them up, embraced all His apostles most lovingly. Let us now, religious soul, diligently consider them and devoutly contemplate all that is here done: and amongst the rest, let us behold the holy souls, who, being present, though invisible, joyfully admire, and inwardly praise the Blessed Virgin, by whom they receive so great a benefit as their salvation. They behold, with pleasing admiration, the glorious champions, and leaders of God's hosts, the Apostles, whom our Lord Jesus had chosen from among all others, to conquer

and subdue the world, and bring it over to the belief of His holy doctrine.

II. POINT.

At length, when the mysteries were all fulfilled and completed, our Lord Jesus began gradually to raise Himself up before them, and to ascend, by His own virtue and power into Heaven. And then the Blessed Virgin, with the rest, fell down and devoutly worshipped Him. Then our Lord, lifting up his hands, with serene and pleasing aspect, crowned with glory, victoriously ascended into Heaven: but first, blessing them, he said: "Be steadfast, and fight courageously, for I shall always be with you, even to the end of the word." Thus, our Lord Jesus, all glorious and resplendently shining, ascended into Heaven, triumphantly leading with Him the noble tribe of holy souls, and fulfilling that which the prophet Micah had said long before His ascension. "And their king shall pass before them, and the Lord at the head of them." So that they all followed Him with unspeakable joy, singing canticles of praises and thanksgivings to Him, for their deliverance from all sorrow, and their entrance into all joy, and never-ending felicity. And Michael, the prince of God's celestial host,

going before, carried the joyful tidings of their Lord's ascending, at which the whole heavenly court of celestial spirits came forth to meet their Lord, and with all worship and reverence, they led Him with hymns and songs of jubilation, repeating with inexpressible joy, Alleluja, Alleluja! Having paid their due reverence to the Lord; and ended the joyful canticles which related to His glorious ascension, the angels and the holy souls from Limbus began to rejoice together. And what tongue can express, or mind conceive, that which passed between them at this happy, happy meeting? The blessed spirits first began to congratulate them on their arrival, saying in this manner: "Ye princes of God's people, ye are welcome to our eternal habitation, and we rejoice and are glad at your arrival: Ye all are gathered together, and wonderfully exalted with our God; Alleluja! Therefore, rejoice and sing to Him who so gloriously ascendeth to Heaven, and above the Heaven of heavens; Alleluja!"

To which the holy souls again joyfully replied, "To you, princes of God's people, Alleluja! Our guardians and helpers! Alleluja! Joy and peace forever, Alleluja! Let us sing and make mirth to our King and our Saviour, Alleluja! Now we joyfully

enter into the house of our Lord, Alleluja! To remain forever in the glorious city of God, Alleluja! As sheep of our Lord's pasture we enter His gates, Alleluja! With hymns and canticles, Alleluja! For the Lord of power is with us, Alleluja! For, according to the prophet, "The Lord is ascended in shouts of joy, and the Lord in the sound of a trumpet." Our Lord Jesus ascended visibly for the greater comfort of His Mother, and disciples, that they might see Him as far as they could. And behold, "A cloud received Him out of their sight, and in an instant they were present in Heaven." And as the Blessed Virgin and the disciples were still looking up, two angels stood beside them in white garments, who began to comfort them, telling them not to look longer after His body, which they saw ascend so gloriously into Heaven, for that they should not see Him any more in that form until the Day of Judgment, when He should come to judge the living and the dead. They bid them return into the city again, and there to expect the coming of the Holy Ghost, as He Himself had told them. Our Lord Jesus, in company with that blessed tribe of holy souls, opened the gates of Heaven, which for a long time had been shut to mankind, and as a victori-

ous conqueror, triumphantly entered in, and joyfully saluting His Father, said: "O Holy Father, I return Thee thanks for the glorious victory Thou hast given me over all our enemies: behold, O Eternal Father, I here present to Thee our friends, who, till this time, have been detained in banishment and in prison! And as I have promised to my disciples and brethren, whom I have left in the world, to send them the Holy Ghost, the comforter, I beseech Thee to fulfil my promise; for, to Thy care and protection I recommend them." To which we may well imagine the Eternal Father replied: "My blessed Son, to Thee all power is given in Heaven and earth, wherefore, concerning all Thou hast asked, dispose and order as shall seem most expedient to Thee." After this, the angelical spirits and holy souls who remained all the time prostrate before the throne of the most adorable Trinity, arose, and with all reverence, renewed their Alleluias, and sang joyfully to the Lord. They all sing, they all rejoice and exult with the utmost jubilation, and with shouts of mirth they praise and glorify the Lord, so that the whole heavenly Jerusalem echoes with joyful Alleluias, and canticles of mirth were heard throughout every part. Never, from the beginning of

time, was there known so solemn a festivity, nor shall ever be again, till after the last and general day of judgment, when all the elect shall meet together in their beautiful and glorious bodies.

III. POINT.

And therefore, this solemn feast of the ascension, if every circumstance be duly considered, is the greatest of all solemnities, which we shall find to be true, if we briefly consider the rest. The incarnation of God is a great feast, a day of solemn jubilation to us, but not to Him, since He was then confined within the narrow compass of the small enclosure of a virginal womb.

His nativity was likewise a great feast, and a day of public rejoicing to us. But He was to be pitied, who was born to such great poverty, suffering and penury. His death and suffering was a great feast to us, because our sins were then all blotted out: but as He suffered most cruel torments and a most vile death, it was not to Him, nor ought it be to us a subject of joy. The resurrection of our Lord Jesus was a most solemn festivity both to Him and to us, because He appeared as a triumphant conqueror over sin and death, and we remained justified; it was, in the opinion of St.

Augustine, a more holy feast than the rest, which may be understood of those which preceded it. For the day of the ascension seems still to be more holy and greater than that; for our Lord rose then from the dead; yet He still remained on earth, the gates of Heaven were not yet open, nor were the holy souls then presented to His Father, which was fulfilled on the day of His ascension. And if we consider whatever God wrought before this, He wrought to this end, without which His work would have been imperfect. For Heaven and earth, with all things in them, were made for man; and man was made only for God, and to enjoy Him in His glory; to which glory, no one, though ever so just, could ever attain after sin till this day. Whence you may in some measure comprehend, how great and wonderful is this day which may properly be called the solemn and joyful festivity of our Lord Jesus. For on this day was He first seated in glory, in the humanity He had assumed, at the right hand of His Father, and enjoyed a perfect rest from His labors. This day is also a feast of great joy and glory to the blessed spirits of Heaven, for on this day they received a new satisfaction, in the sight of their Lord, whom before they had not seen under the veil of His sacred hu-

manity. And on this day was began to be repaired the ruins of their heavenly company occasioned by the fall of their reprobate brethren, some of whose vacancies were filled by a glorious number of blessed souls, of patriarchs, prophets and others, who on this day triumphantly entered the heavenly Jerusalem, and took possession of it as their own right and inheritance. Wherefore, as we solemnly celebrate the feast of one saint or martyr who departed this life, and entered the glory of Heaven, how much more ought we to do the same for so many thousands, who entered together, in company with the Holy of Holies, who is far more worthy all praise, honor and glory, than all the saints and angels together. This day is likewise a feast of special joy to the Blessed Virgin, in as much as she beheld her blessed son Jesus, perfect God and perfect man, crowned with glory and triumph, ascend victoriously to Heaven. It is also a feast of joy to us, for on this day was our nature first exalted above the highest heavens; and had He not ascended, we could not have received the greatest of all gifts, the Holy Ghost, whom He had promised to send us; wherefore, He said to His disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go, for if I go not, the Paraclete shall not come to

you." St. Bernard saith, in His sermon on this day, "The glorious feast of the ascension is the end and accomplishment of all other feasts and solemnities, and a blessed conclusion of the weary pilgrimage of Jesus Christ on earth."

Hence then, may you gather, religious soul, that this feast is greater and more solemn than all the others, and that soul which truly and earnestly loves our Lord Jesus, should on this day lift his mind more earnestly to Heaven, and endeavor to receive a greater plenitude of spiritual joy and comfort than on all other festivals of the year. For our Lord said to His disciples, "Truly if you loved me, you would rejoice and be glad because I go to the Father." Whence it appears from His own words, that there is no day in Heaven more joyful than this which lasted till the following day of Pentecost, and we may devoutly imagine it to have been kept, and solemnized in the following manner: — The ascension of our Lord and Saviour was about the sixth hour. And although the whole court of Heaven made a general rejoicing in a manner beyond all expression, yet from the hour of his ascension to the sixth hour of the next day; we may piously imagine that the angels more particularly celebrated this joy-

ful festival. And, in the same manner, on the second, the archangels; on the third day the virtues; on the fourth day, the powers; on the fifth, the principalities; on the sixth, the dominations; on the seventh, the thrones; on the eighth, the cherubims; on the ninth, the seraphims; which are the nine orders of holy angels, who continued their joyful solemnity till the vigil of Pentecost: from which time, to the third hour of the day following, which is Whitsuntide, the holy souls, with the rest of their blessed company, made the same solemn rejoicings. Thus, during the space of ten days, before the descent of the Holy Ghost upon earth, they all continued in an uninterrupted acclamation of praise, glory and thanksgiving to God, to Whom be continued the same by every creature to the end of the world and forever.

Colloquy with our Lord. Congratulate Him on the great glory of His ascension into Heaven.

Meditation

For the Friday within the Octave of the Ascension.

The Wonders which the Holy Ghost accomplished in the Apostles.

First Prelude: Represent to yourself the Blessed Virgin with the Apostles and Disciples assembled in the Cenacle.

Second Prelude: Ask for an increase of humility, fervor and devotion that may attract the Holy Spirit into our souls.

I. POINT.

How great, how precious is the soul of man in the eyes of its Creator! how dear is it to the three adorable persons of the Blessed Trinity! The Father and the Holy Ghost have so loved the world, as to bestow on it the Eternal Word in the mystery of the Incarnation, and they have so loved us individually, as to give this same Word made flesh for our daily food. The Eternal Father and the Word have so loved the world, as to bestow on man that Divine Spirit, who is the personal love of the

Father and the Son. And although this second gift, considered in itself, does not, and cannot exceed the first, nevertheless, Jesus Christ assures us, that, viewed in all its circumstances, it is even a more precious donation. The Incarnation was a blessing bestowed on all men in general, without a single exception; but the real presence of the Holy Ghost in our hearts, the happy fruit of our Redeemer's ascension, is a privilege reserved to Christians only, or rather to the just, under the law of grace.

Oh! how are we elevated by the principle of our adoption! it is He who makes us children of God, brethren of Jesus Christ, animated and living temples of the ever adorable Trinity. By Him we are spiritualized, even, in some sort deified; yes, by Him we are born to God Himself, gloriously created in Jesus Christ. In fine, what treasures has not Jesus bestowed in giving us His Holy Spirit, that Spirit of life, who in us becomes the fruitful source of every light and grace? He enlightens the dullest minds, instructs in all truth the least tractable hearts, rendering them docile and faithful to the inspirations of His grace, and as "He breatheth where He wills," no description of character is an insuperable obstacle to His divine operation. What an

astonishing difference between the Apostles reared in the school of Jesus Christ Himself, and these same Apostles regenerated by the Holy Ghost? Changed by the spirit of love into new men! Jerusalem knew them not; the universe seemed too confined a theatre for their labors, and all hearts too small a conquest for their zeal. Happy he whom this Divine Spirit instructs, and thrice happy the soul implicitly docile to His amiable voice! Faith is, according to the Apostles, "the evidence of things not seen," but the Holy Ghost, by the gift of knowledge, displays to us, in some sort, that which we believe. By wisdom, we are taught to relish the sweetness concealed in the heavenly maxims of Jesus Christ. Fortitude, renders that which once was bitter and apparently impossible, supportable, easy and delightful. These are the miracles, the wonders of the Love of the Holy Spirit; these are the admirable changes that are continually effected in those souls which are docile to His inspirations and entirely abandoned to His guidance.

II. POINT.

The Holy Spirit, that He may abide in us, and we in Him, desires to contract with our souls a spiritual, celestial, and divine alli-

ance. "I will," says He, by the mouth of the prophet, "espouse thee in mercy and commiserations." But this admirable union can never be found without free co-operation on our part, and an ardent desire of participating in the gifts of Heaven. "Wherefore, I wished, and understanding was given me: and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me." "I opened my mouth and panted, because I longed for thy Commandments." Our Divine Lord Himself assures us that the Eternal Father grants the *good spirit*, the author of every blessing, to the desire of those who ask. Let us, then, ardently and perseveringly invite the Holy Spirit to take up His residence in the centre of our souls. If these desires be sincere, they certainly proceed from the Holy Spirit; it is by Him they are formed; it is He who prays in and by us. Can there be more solid ground to hope for the accomplishment of our desires? for God, inspiring them, had no other view than their gratification. To prayer must be joined great purity of heart. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God," and their love for purity of conscience is a sure proof of the watchful tenderness of that Almighty Being who has solemnly promised that "he that loveth cleanness of heart shall have the king for his friend."

To become the dwelling of this infinitely pure and sacred Spirit, our souls must be cleansed from everything displeasing to so great, so amiable a guest. Remember, Christian soul, that it is, perhaps, easier than you imagine to wound the delicacy of this Divine Spirit. To be convinced of this, we need only remember that, according to the Fathers, the descent of the Holy Ghost was obstructed by too natural an attachment to the sensible presence of Jesus Christ. If this attachment, so laudable, so justly merited, proved an obstacle to the operation of the Holy Spirit, what must we think of our attachment to creatures, and of our daily infidelities? How diligently should we labor to break those ties, to efface those transgressions!—but, above all, with what care should we banish, destroy and annihilate in our souls, the hateful monster of pride; for the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of lies cannot dwell together!

Of this vice, St. Francis de Sales says: "I would rather that the cloister were filled with all vices than with the sin of pride and vanity; because in other offences one can repent and obtain pardon, but the proud soul has in itself the principle of all vices, and never does penance, considering itself to be in a good state, and despising all

advice given it. Nothing can be done with a soul that is vain and full of self-conceit; it is no good either to itself or others." Pride being the principle of evil, is also the chief obstacle to the working of the Holy Spirit. However, though we may resolve to root out, and to plant, to destroy and to build; yet we must remember that it belongs to God alone to prepare His tabernacle, and to change a carnal heart into a sanctuary worthy of Himself.

III. POINT.

But to vanquish the many obstacles that impede our spiritual progress, and to arrive at length to the desirable term of christian perfection, the most heroic and invincible courage is absolutely necessary. The Holy Spirit cannot sovereignly reign in the heart, but by the destruction of is natural inclinations; nor can these be otherwise destroyed than by crucifixion. More penetrating than a two-edged sword, He pierces the very soul, and disengages her from a body which He teaches her to despise and detest. In fine, He will gradually divide and separate her from her very self, for this jealous Spirit will not permit that she, whom He destines for His spouse, should find either pleasure or support in creatures. Suspended between

heaven and earth, He keeps her, in some degree, deprived of the consolations of both. In a thousand ways, and by numberless painful trials, she is, for her greater perfection and detachment from self, afflicted, tormented, and interiorly crucified. But powerfully supported by the Holy Ghost, this soul attains, by a continual and universal death, to that God whom she sought, whom she desires, whom she loved above all things, and who alone is her true life. The privation of all comfort is to her the sweetest consolation, and in the loss of all things, she finds an inestimable treasure, and thus exemplifies the truth of that emphatic sentence of the Imitation: "Forsake all, and thou shalt find all; leave thy desires, and thou shalt find rest."

Miraculous prodigy of love! thou art inconceivable to all those to whom experience has not happily discovered they hidden charms. Ah! Christian, Religious! were it necessary to suffer from fire and sword, for the preservation of this miserable life, you would be disposed to do so, you would endure all, nothing would discourage you; and yet you are terrified and stop short at the difficult enterprise of living the celestial, immortal life of God Himself, of being transformed into His image, and of becoming one with Him.

Divine Spirit, source of every grace! may the ardent desire Thou hast enkindled in the hearts of Thy chosen ones of possessing Thee, be proof against all trials, may it never be stifled nor weakened by the seemingly arduous exercise of fervent and continual prayer, and generous and universal mortification. May they never shrink from interior martyrdom, which is the sole means of acquiring that purity of heart, which prepares the soul for Thy divine communications.

Colloquy with our Blessed Mother.

Meditation

For Saturday within the Octave of the Ascension.

The Effects which the Holy Ghost produced in the Apostles.

First Prelude: Represent to yourself the Blessed Virgin with the Apostles and Disciples assembled in the Cenacle.

Second Prelude: Ask for great purity of heart and ardent zeal in the service of your heavenly Master.

I. POINT.

The Holy Spirit gives Himself to them. This Spirit is the source and principle of all graces, virtues and supernatural goods. The essential and personal Love of the Father and of the Son gives Himself to them. He unites them to Himself in a particular manner,—He ennobles them,—He makes them children of God. What glory, what happiness for them! Let us ardently desire the same advantages, for He will also give Himself to us. Say frequently with a lively faith and an ardent desire: "Veni, Sancte Spiritus!" Let us offer Him our hearts, and render them worthy of Himself. They who receive this Divine Spirit are the Apostles and Disciples, ignorant, weak, despicable in the eyes of the world, but not contemned by the Almighty. They are humble, fervent, devout: these are the qualities which are estimable in the sight of Heaven, and which are far preferable to the brilliant, superficial accomplishments that attract the attention and admiration of worldlings: "My Spirit resteth on the poor and humble." The Holy Spirit daily communicates Himself to those who are disposed to receive Him, viz: to those who are fervent, humble and devout. Let us use our utmost endeavors to acquire these requisite dispositions.

They are replenished with the Holy Spirit. They had previously received Him because they were just; but on this occasion they were replenished with Him. Their minds were illuminated with the most admirable lights, — their hearts filled with the most ardent love, replete with an abundance of supernatural gifts and graces, united more closely to their God, and replenished with a vehement desire to please Him. Let us consider our poverty and the need we have of these heavenly treasures. Let us entreat them of the Holy Spirit, saying: "Come, Father of the poor, come, Thou Giver of all good gifts."

II. POINT.

The descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles was a baptism of fire: "You will be baptized by the Holy Ghost." He purified them from their sins, and remitted the punishment which was their due. He delivered them from the tyranny of the devil, from concupiscence and from vicious inclinations; He replenished them with grace; gave them infused virtues; changed them into new men who breathed only the love of God. After having considered the pitiable state in which we are, and the extreme need we have of a similar change, let us entreat

our Divine Lord to operate in us by means of His Holy Spirit the same admirable fruits which he effected in the Apostles. The Apostles were filled with zeal for the interest of their heavenly Master. They preach His sublime doctrine, fearless of persecution, of torments, and of death; they dispersed themselves throughout the whole world in order to make Him known, loved and served. Let us be confounded within ourselves at the consideration of our want of zeal and fervor in the service of God. Let us entreat the Apostles to obtain for us a portion of that zeal with which they were animated. They spoke with divers tongues under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Admire this gift of tongues, so necessary to the Apostles, who were commissioned to preach to all nations, and know that it is the Holy Spirit, and not vanity, envy or interest that induces them to speak. They speak of God, of His inconceivable grandeur,—His munificent rewards. They speak with hearts inflamed with love, zeal and benediction. Let us entreat the Holy Spirit to regulate our mind, heart and tongue according to the same principles.

III. POINT.

They made reparation for their past infidelity, when, filled with ardent zeal and

burning love, they publicly preached the divinity of Him whom they had abandoned through cowardice, and denied through weakness. They were ready to suffer every affliction for the love of Him, they suffered joyfully; — they died for Him; — thus they made ample reparation for their past faults. Let us also make reparation for our manifold transgressions by loving this amiable Saviour, laboring and suffering for Him in proportion to our past unfaithfulness in His service. They repaired the honor of our adorable Saviour by preaching the greatness, the glory of Him who had come hither to be crucified, by causing Him to be adored in the places where He had previously been covered with ignominy, and by procuring Him as many, true, devoted followers, as He before had blasphemers. Let us rejoice with the new Church on the happiness of their conversion—with the Apostles on the success of their labors, and with Jesus on the glory which the Holy Spirit has procured Him. They repaired the honor of our Divine Lord in all nations. It was at the time of the Paschal feast that our loving Saviour had willed to be crucified; a time when strangers from all parts of the known world assembled in Jerusalem to be present at the Paschal solemnities, and who, on

their return to their respective countries, spread the news of His infamous death. At the feast of Pentecost, people were likewise gathered from all parts of the world, to whom the Apostles made known the ressurrection, the glorious life, the divinity of Jesus Christ,—and who, on their return would publish the wonders they had learned. Their recital was confirmed by the Apostles who soon followed them, in order to make their beloved Master everywhere known and adored. Let us be likewise animated with an ardent zeal that will courageously overcome all obstacles and difficulties in order to make this amiable Saviour known, loved, adored and served.

Colloquy with the holy Apostles.

Meditation

For the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension.

The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Ghost.

First Prelude: Represent to yourself the Blessed Virgin with the Apostles and Disciples in the Cenacle.

Second Prelude: Let us entreat the Holy Spirit to remove from our hearts every obstacle that would prevent us from receiving Him with the fulness of His gifts.

I. POINT.

The gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost seem to embrace all our spiritual wants. All our intellectual capacities find their expansion in the gifts, while the fruits exhibit the action of the Holy Spirit on the heart. And this is exactly what St. Francis de Sales says, in one of his sermons of the twofold work of the Holy Ghost. He illuminates the understanding to know the truth, and He warms the heart to love the law of God. The Saint finds a mysterious allusion to this, even in the number of one hundred and twenty, which was the number of the believers who were gathered together in the Cenacle on the day of Pentecost—a number which is made up of twelve multiplied by ten: the twelve articles of faith, enriched by the observance of the ten Commandments of God.

When we ponder these holy words in our hearts, we instinctively feel that neither of the lists of gifts and fruits is perfect without the other. Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel and Knowledge would not satisfy us,

unless accompanied by Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Benignity and Goodness. We do need light to guide and show us the way, and much more do we need fire to warm our hearts.

By what tokens can we know that the Holy Spirit has indeed visited, renewed and signed us? It is to the fruits we must chiefly look, "for by their fruits you shall know them."

And what virtues could be more suitable for us religious, than the fruits of the Holy Ghost? What a beautiful picture would a community present that possessed them in greatest perfection? To say nothing of charity, which all must feel to be the one essential condition of community life; but how would joy and peace make sunshine in it! How many thorns would patience take out of our path! How pleasant and easy would long suffering, and goodness, and benignity make our intercourse with one another; and how would the good odor, the grace and the beauty of virtue, shine in meekness, modesty, and the rest!

Let us not despair of realizing in the sight of God and His holy Angels, this beautiful idea; for our Lord intended religious houses — the homes of His chosen spouses — to be sheltered from the cold, cutting winds of

worldly temptations; wherein, as in a garden enclosed, these lovely flowers might blossom and flourish.

Here, in these blessed abodes, the Holy Spirit should have His full action and reign supreme over our hearts, to mould them as He wills. And, He will most certainly establish His reign within us, if we do but clear away all rubbish with a determined will and a generous hand.

Quoting from the Canticle of canticles, St. Francis de Sales says: "Arise and depart, O north wind, and come O south wind; blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow: Let the power and the virtues of Christ dwell in me."

"May the Divine Spouse not be disappointed then, when He comes into His garden to eat the fruit of His apple trees; but may He find the aromatical spices of these beautiful virtues, giving forth, far and wide, the good odor of Christ."

II. POINT.

The Holy Spirit ought to rule supreme in our souls, and we must yield ourselves to His supreme dominion, and be as St. Paul says, "led by the Spirit" if we hope to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. It is to this interior life that our venerable Father

Medaille urges us so strongly in the Constitutions.

As religious, our work is only half done, if the interior spirit be wanting. Exterior exercises will profit us little or nothing, if the interior is left barren or neglected.

Though religious are sheltered in "the garden enclosed," yet we are placed in a world of sin and sorrow, towards whom we have special duties to perform.

What should we do, but endeavor to diffuse around us the sweet odor of Jesus Christ, scattering seeds, as we go along which may bring forth a plentiful harvest, in time to come? Most certainly, the fruit of our labors will be in proportion to the grace within us. Let us take one of the beautiful fruits of the Holy Ghost, Peace, and dwell on it, pondering it well in our hearts. Peace of soul, though allied, is something different from joy; less rapturous, but more calm. A person can feel peace, even in the midst of suffering; and of all spiritual secrets, the secret of preserving, or regaining interior peace, is one of the most precious.

Peace is the fruit of justice; it flows from a conscience at rest. It also is the outcome of an entire repose in the will of God. "Great peace have they, who love Thy law,

and to them there is no stumbling-block;" thirdly, it comes of detachment which delivers us from the unquietness of desires so harassing to us; fourthly, from humility: for of all the profound experiences of interior peace, none equals that which flows into the soul, when it has generously bowed its head and heart to a humiliation; and lastly, it is the almost infallible consequence of prayer; not of a passing, hasty, occasional prayer, but of prayer long persevered in, and earnestly, heartily made. Let us keep on praying, dispite disgusts and discouragements, opening our hearts to God, and the floodgates of peace will open upon us.

May this beautiful, precious fruit of peace be rich and abundant in our souls! How calm, how tranquil, how just, how free from the raging storms of human passions will our souls then be!

"Peace," says the Angelic Doctor, "is the tranquillity of order," and they are words, well deserving our remembrance and serious meditation.

Let us fervently implore our Immaculate Mother to obtain for us a copious outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that may produce in our hearts, this precious fruit of Peace which the world cannot give.

III. POINT.

The religious state is often called by the saints the very garden of the Church, where all the choicest influences are stored up for our use—the fertilizing sun, the early and latter rain, the waters of refreshment. We, as religious, must not then be barren fig trees, whereon, when our Lord comes seeking fruit, He finds, leaves only. May the Holy Spirit Himself—the spirit of truth and holiness—come into this garden, and plant and produce therein most delicious fruits, and so make of the convents we inhabit, "gardens enclosed, and fountains sealed up"—a true paradise for the Beloved of our hearts, wherein He may find His delight to dwell, and enjoy the fruits thereof.

The world knows nothing of the sweetness that is stored up in that garden: To its sense it is truly "a fountain sealed up;" but we, who have received the gift of vocation, know truly, and remember well the fragrance which first attracted our hearts, and the delight, passing all worldly joys which we have found therein.

With what fervent gratitude ought we not then thank the Lord of the garden, for calling us into His earthly paradise, and permitting us, even in this life to taste

something of that joy and peace which the world cannot take away from us.

Let us reflect that the Lord of this garden is our only end. This centre of all goodness, all sweetness, all beauty, and all joy is the end, to reach which, and to be united to which forever more, is the one reason of our creation. Just as we build a house to live in it, or a ship that it may carry us to a port—having no other sense and meaning, except for that purpose—so there is no sense or meaning in our existence, unless we follow after and attain this one end. To reach and attain this end, no sacrifice is too great, no suffering worthy to be named, nothing to be put in comparison with it for a moment; it is when we are conscious of this, and more than this, which words could only poorly express, that we are relishing something of the taste and savor of the Gift of Wisdom.

"Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart" says the Royal Psalmist. If turning our eyes away from the littleness of created things to fix those of our heart on God, we come to know and understand more of His beauty, the riches of His goodness, His wonderful life here on earth. He is the Alpha and the Omega of all things, the beginning and the

end. May He, by His Divine Spirit unveil this truth unto us more and more, and thus dispose us to fix our hearts where alone, true joys are to be found; so that all of us who are united in making this blessed Novena, may find in Him our present exceeding joy, and our future, eternal reward.

Colloquy with our Lady, the Apostles and Disciples, assembled in the Cenacle.

Meditation

For Monday within the Octave of the Ascension.

"Come, Holy Ghost, and send from Heaven a ray of Thy light!"

First Prelude: Represent to yourself the Blessed Virgin, with the Apostles and Disciples assembled in the Cenacle.

Second Prelude: Ask for the fulness of the light of the Holy Spirit.

I. POINT.

You who ask Him to come, do you ask it in sincerity? If He were to come, would you repent that you had called Him? If He

came to reproach you with the little which you have done for Him, if He came to urge you to do more, if He came to propose to you some heroic act of perfection, would you rejoice, or would you grieve? Alas! I fear that you would dread the coming which you had prayed for.

"I feared, lest I should be too quickly heard," says St. Austin, in his miserable hesitation whether or not to give himself to God, fearing that God would hear him, if he prayed. He wished the Spirit to come, but not so soon, not so suddenly. And you, too, religious soul, you wish Him to come, but at your leisure, at your taste, at your caprice. Oh! vain desire. Oh! lame will, oh! weak, slothful velleity, thou willest, and willest not. He will not come — no, He will not come. He knows that it is a formal invitation and empty speech. Away with these feigned and irresolute desires! Say once for all, with all thy heart: come now, come to-day, come wholly, and not hereafter, not tomorrow, not in part. If you say "Come" to the Holy Spirit, you must say "Go" to the senses. The light must be divided from the darkness. The Holy Spirit and the spirit of evil cannot dwell together. You say the Holy Spirit, because He is a pure spirit, He is perfectly

holy. You say well. But why so much dust and pollution in your spirit? He is absolute simplicity. If He is to be united with your spirit He must find therein neither mixture nor impediment. Prepare yourself for the crucible which is to make you all gold, all spirit. Repeat the exorcism of the priest, which you understood not when you were baptized: "Let the unclean spirit depart from thee, and give place to the Holy Spirit."

II. POINT.

Beseech Him to shed upon you from on high a ray of His light, of that light which illumines every man who cometh into the world. Oh! may He give you more and more. The Holy Spirit keeps His eyes continually fixed upon you, beholding you, now with the eye of a father, now of a judge, with an eye of approbation or displeasure. If you see Him not, it is because you will not see Him, because you hate light, and fix your eyes upon the earth. It is from no deficiency of light in God, but from defect of sight in you. You seek to hide yourself, even, from yourself, and to conceal yourself even from God. But the veil of malice is transparent, and it is too plain that you have the light, of faith and of reason; there-

fore, your wilful blindness cannot excuse you. Oh! may one living ray of God's light shine even here, and light up that abyss of living death. That He may send it from on high, an arrow from the bow, that it may pierce directly to your heart, and inflict upon it a salutary wound. Mark this, that if the Divine ray comes like an arrow, its coming is most sudden, most rapid, and almost imperceptible. Watch, then, well over yourself; look out for the visitation from Heaven; seize the first touch, the first glimpse. If you delay it may be that you will not even perceive the flash. A wise soul keeps a continual guard over itself, and sees more, says Ecclesiasticus than seven sentinels standing on their watch.

III. POINT.

You ask for a ray, a ray of that beneficient, efficacious, and gracious illumination on which your salvation and perfection depend. That which will never forsake you, neither in the morning of prosperity, nor in the evening of adversity, nor in the night of death. That which, in peril, in perplexity and in temptation will enlighten, direct, comfort, and bring you to a happy end. One of those merciful and omnipotent

glances which He gave to Peter, moving Him to tears, which He gave to Magdalen, moving her to love much. A ray of divine light, of eternal truth, of evangelical prudence, not of human wisdom or policy, nor of dangerous, erroneous, and diabolical duplicity. By its pure and clear light take counsel first with God, direct yourself by the will of God. Its pious teaching is most profitable, even in temporal matters, and will suffice to lead you safely throughout the whole course of your life. The many opinions and questionings of this world diminish and come to naught: "truths are diminished from the children of men, they are diminished because they either fall short of the end, or they are false and contradict themselves. But the science of the saints, which alone is true, stands alone, and has for its foundation and teacher, the infallible and immutable truth, even God Himself. Therefore, a simple and unlearned man, or a poor old woman knows more of prayer than all the philosophers of the world. O glorious light of the face of God, light of truth, light of understanding, light of counsel, light of discernment, light of all wisdom. Oh! come, come! Follow me in these syllables of the sacred hymn, and they will cast a thousand rays of heavenly fire upon

your eyes, your mind and your heart. Divine Spirit, let Thy penetrating rays enlighten my understanding, and Thy consuming fire inflame my heart, that I may know and love the "breadth, and length, and height, and depth of the infinite love, by which I am loved." Come, Creating Spirit, Divine and Heavenly Fire! Come and enkindle in our hearts the flames of Thy love!

Meditation

For Tuesday within the Octave of the Ascension.

"Come, Father of the poor, come, Giver of gifts, come Light of hearts."

First Prelude: Represent to yourself the Blessed Virgin with the Apostles and Disciples assembled in the Cenacle.

Second Prelude: Ask for the virtues of holy poverty and a perfect detachment from creatures.

I. POINT.

Say it a thousand times and more, but always with those fervent desires and unut-

terable groanings with which the Holy Spirit loves to intercede and prevail for us. Assuredly there is urgent need. Father of the poor! But for the Holy Spirit assisting and providing for you, what would you be? Nothing, absolutely nothing. In Him alone you live, and act, and are. "No man," says St. Paul, "can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;" and, "No one," says the Council of Trent, "can make an act of either charity or contrition, so as to obtain the grace of justification, without the assistance of the Holy Ghost," "Without Me," says Jesus, speaking in His own name, and in that of the Holy Ghost, "you can do nothing,"—nothing that is meritorious, nothing good and worthy of eternal life, without the special aid of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ. You see, then, in what exceeding need you stand of the helps of the Holy Spirit. In all things, you depend absolutely upon His will and power. Can there be a state of more entire destitution? Yet, I would not have you ashamed of your poverty. You are poor, indeed, but you are the child of a most noble and wealthy Father. He is the common Father of all men, but especially of the just, by His especial care of them, and the especial reverence they bear Him—

Father of the poor! O beloved poverty! which shows forth my Father's royal bounty, how could I be better provided for than by Her? Our wealth is, that we can ask and receive. Our misery would be to be left to our own absolute guidance: woe to the prodigal who asks for the portion of goods that falls to Him. Far better is it to submit yourself, and to use your liberty only, to do the will of your Father. Go then, like a beggar to His feet, and say to Him: "I am a beggar and poor;" and forthwith He will provide you with all things.

II. POINT.

Observe that He is first called Father of the poor, and then Giver of gifts. He is not a giver unless He is a father. The Holy Spirit is the Father of the poor, that is, of the poor in spirit, the humble of heart, and to the humble of heart alone He communicates Himself, and imparts His gifts. "He gives grace to the humble. He is deaf to the proud. He hardens His Heart against them. He keeps His hand closed: not a crumb even from His table for them; rather will He give to the dogs of Canaan than to the Pharisees." He resisted the proud, and the more, when they are more miserable and presumptious,

in proportion to their misery. Gracious and merciful as He is, He cannot endure proud poverty. He will not look upon one who is poor and proud, but drives Him far out of His sight. Know yourself, therefore, for what you are; never fancy yourself rich. God gives alms to Him that asks. He breaks His bread to the hungry. Be not ashamed, then, to stretch out your hand. Oh! how many perish, because they would pass for rich and well fed! Tell to Him, then, all your miseries, one by one: be not like the poor who are ashamed of their poverty. To acknowledge your poverty is the speedy way to attain unbounded wealth. Giver of gifts! The Holy Spirit gives all His gifts gratis. The gift of God is not to be bought as Simon Magus presumed to think. It is inestimable, it is most lavish. It is given to whosoever wills, and that act of willing costs so little, that the very purchase money is a gift, and the purchase a reward: "Come, buy without money." Oh! what a Giver, He gives nothing by contract, or for a return: all, all for pure love. Where is your liberality towards God? You will give Him nothing which is not of precept and obligation. Does this seem to you a fitting and noble return? Oh! render Him at least what in

justice you owe Him. Were you liberal towards the Holy Spirit, in the same measure and far beyond, would He be liberal towards you.

III. POINT.

He is light, but the light of the heart. He burns no less intensely than He shines. What will the light of a clear intellect avail, if you want the fire of a good will? You grieve, perhaps, that you understand so little of God, when you should rather grieve that you love Him so little. Tell me, do your actions correspond with your knowledge? You know that He deserves to be loved, and that you are bound to love and honor Him above all things. Do you thus love and honor Him? When you have made a good use of one light, He will give you a second; to a second, He will add a third, and so on. But if you will not make use of the first, if your malice or your sloth oppose an obstacle in its way, to what purpose should He give you the trouble and responsibility of another? Light of hearts! Oh! how many blind there are who see and see not! Rebels against light, they sin and see not. A blindness which is culpable, because chosen by man, and penal, because permitted by God. Again, observe that the Holy Spirit is a light which makes the

blind doubly blind. It is not that they are wholly unable to see, but they blind themselves. Oh! were they totally blind their misery would be less. Pity them and weep over them. Light of hearts! Do you desire that His light should increase within you? Let your heart reflect it upon your mind. The Holy Spirit, who is the love breathed forth by the Father and the Son, proceeds by the way of the will. Thus His light is diffused upon us rather by the way of holy affections, than of sublime thoughts. A beautiful thought of God, without charity, is nothing better than a crystal lamp without oil. Provide yourself with oil to feed the flame, and with a shade to protect it. "Quench not the spirit." Do not expose it to every draught of air. A breath will extinguish it. Shade it within your heart, and your heart will fail you sooner than the light.

Meditation

For Wednesday within the Octave of the Ascension.

"Best Comforter, Sweet Guest of the soul, Sweet Refreshment."

First Prelude: Represent to yourself the

Blessed Virgin, with the Apostles and Disciples assembled in the Cenacle.

Second Prelude: Ask for an ardent zeal in the service of your Heavenly Master.

I. POINT.

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter. He is the God of all consolation, and therefore, the best Comforter. But the best is also the only Comforter. If He is to comfort you, you must be alone with Him. If you listen to other comforters, you will silence Him at once. In displeasure at the little respect you show to His person, and the light esteem in which you hold his word, in seeking consolation elsewhere, He will turn His face from you, and leave you to talk with the serpent who flatters, and deceives you. Of whom do you complain that you do not experience spiritual consolation? Complain of the cause of your desolation, which is yourself. You want consolation within, because you have sought it too eagerly without. You hunt after pleasure here and there, like Esau, by the perilous ways of the world. If you would stay at home, like Jacob, your mother, a good conscience, would bring you savory meats whereby to obtain the twofold blessing of your Father: "The dew of Heaven

and the fatness of the earth." Does the Holy Spirit lack the art or power to prepare for you wholesome food? and food even pleasing to your natural taste, so that it cannot be corrupted? "Who so delightful," says St. Austin, "as He who made all things which delight us?" I would have you believe without putting it to the test of experience, that there is no true consolation to be found in the world.

There are but a few drops of will and poisonous honey. "Only a little honey," said Jonathan, "and now I must die." Seek not your consolation, then, where it is not to be found. Beseech the Holy Spirit to shed over the delights of the world a salutary bitterness which may detach you from their baleful joy, that you may taste and see His sweetness. So shall that best comforter abide in your spirit.

II. POINT.

The Holy Spirit under my roof! "And whence is this to me?" Who has moved Him to come? His own sweet goodness alone. I had driven Him away; and does He return? Yes, the Guest of my soul! Oh! most loving Guest. And where was I when I sought Thee? Nay, when I did not even think of seeking Thee, thou wast before me. And I had lost myself.

But now, I know not whence, nor how thou hast come and art within me. Oh, my heart! and dost thou not perceive His presence! Oh, all that is within me, adore Him, thank Him, serve Him; in one word, love Him. Ah! take good heed not to displease nor offend Him. He abides, and will eternally abide within you. You are more truly in Him than in yourself. Oh, my God, may I be present with Thee with a loving presence, even as Thou dost vouchsafe to be present with me; I am not content that thou shouldst be with me as a guest: Thou art the Master of the house, dwell in it as its Master. Dispose of it as Thou wilt. I do not lend it to Thee, I do not lend it to Thee on hire, I give it to Thee, I make it over to Thee, from the foundation to the roof. Thou alone shalt dwell therein, for it belongs to Thee alone. Thou didst make it, Thou hast repaired it, what further right have I to it? Write over the door "This is the Lord's house." But if Thou art its sole and absolute Founder and Master, forget not, O Lord, that it belongs to Thee to maintain and furnish it. I have no means to keep it in repair. Thou seest in what ruin and disorder it is. At Thy coming, at a glance from Thee, all shall be restored

and beautified; but it must be at Thine own cost. Oh! be it so, as I hope in Thy grace. Sweet Guest of the soul, depart from it no more!

III. POINT.

If the Holy Spirit with His consoling presence takes up His abode with you, what strength and refreshment will you experience? Refreshment in trouble. So great will be your interior joy, that all exterior trials will give you little or no pain. If misfortune visits you, you will say that it is the loving touch of God's hand, and you will adore and kiss it, even because it strikes you. You will rejoice in tribulation, because it pleases God to afflict you for His glory and your profit. Nay, though even it were to be of no benefit to yourself, you would desire out of pure love, "Either to suffer or to die;" or rather, "to suffer, and not to die." Refreshment in temptations: What have you to fear, if the Holy Spirit be with you, and wholly on your side? Who will dare to approach you? Who will be able to overcome you? If only you forsake Him not, He will bear the brunt of the battle for you. He watches for you, and will give you timely warning. He hovers round you to keep you waking. He keeps His eye on the movements of the

enemy. He hastens to the weakest part of your array, and beats back the threatened assault. He pioneers the way before you, and breaks the shock of the enemy. No danger can befall you unawares, no necessity find you unprovided. What ample provisions! what impregnable defences! What triumphant sorties against the foe! Closed gates, double entrenchments, innumerable fortifications — make use of all these means of strength and power wherewith the Holy Spirit assists you, fights with you, and conquers within you, and then lose courage if you can.

Meditation

For Thursday, Octav of the Ascension.

"In labor rest, in heat, coolness, in weeping solace."

First Prelude: Represent to yourself the Blessed Virgin, with the Apostles and Disciples assembled in the Cenacle.

Second Prelude: Ask for grace to hearken to and diligently follow the inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

I. POINT.

Our whole life is a tissue of labors and toils. Let us chose the state which pleases us best, we shall find them everywhere. But, oh my God, if we lose all our labor, what a loss will it be! To labor so hard, and to gain nothing, when we might not only reap a sure harvest, but obtain great relief in our toil. The Holy Spirit, who is the first mover of our work is never idle. He is ever in movement for our benefit, nor is He ever subject to weariness. Oh! if you would but only labor after His example and in His spirit, you would find sweet repose in the midst of your labors, He who toils for love of the glory of the Holy Spirit, feels not the burden of his toil; or if he feels it, he finds it to be light, indeed, and far sweeter than idleness. "In labor rest." All your disquietude proceeds from disorder. Your affections are misplaced: what wonder if they cause you pain! Establish your heart first in its center, and in union with its last end, and you will feel no weight. You must balance it by the movements of the spirit, and then, having found the medium of virtue, it will remain steadfast and immovable. The superior part of your soul must serve as a continual balance and counterpoise to the inferior, so that it

may not be depressed by excess of sadness, nor elated by excess of joy. Seek your rest where you will, you will never find it, except in God. Solomon sought it before you, in all the enjoyments of the world. But he found there nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit. Do you hope to find anything better? Neither will you find anything; — you will find a mere nothing behind its empty show. Never will a heart capable of receiving the Infinite Good find rest, until it rest in Thee, most Blessed Spirit! Wherefore, then, vainly seek peace where it is not to be found? "Peace! peace! and there is no peace" in the world. Live in harmony with the Holy Spirit, and He will give you that true peace which none but He can give. But remember that He gives it not to the slothful and negligent, He gives it only to the valiant who labor and toil, instead of indulging in ease and pleasure. For he who labors by the grace of the Holy Spirit, beside the reward of His labor, receives the added boon of rest in motion.

II. POINT.

Your heart is between two fires. Alas! it is on fire; it will soon burn to ashes. A third fire is needful to preserve and keep

it alive. Irascibility is an evil flame, concupiscence a worse. Between the two, how shall a heart of flesh and blood escape? What defence is there against all the fire and sulphur wherewith the spirits, of evil and the senses, sometimes more malignant still, add fury to the flame? Unless the pure, beautiful flame of holy love come to its aid, the heart will assuredly be suffocated and perish. It is the only remedy for so fearful an evil. Not that irascibility and concupiscence are evil in themselves; they may, and they ought to serve as instruments to the end for which they where created: irascibility, to encourage; and concupiscence to allure you to follow after your true good. But they have been so corrupted, that, unless corrected and regulated by the Holy Spirit, they produce endless disorders and abuses. I do not say that they should be annihilated, but rather that they should be moderated. You ought always to be in fear on this account, and never to trust to them, because they are still wild animals, and hard to be bridled. You need good light and long habit to be able to discern when anger is just, and appetite harmless. Passion easily deceives us, especially in the spiritual life; zeal is not always true zeal, nor every affection

holy which we take to be such. Measure them always by the rule which the Church proposes to you. Examine if your zeal spring from the spirit of Christ, or of Elias, or it may be, of Belial. Observe, further, that a mild temperature, whether in nature or in the soul, has something unspeakably pleasing and healthful; that, therefore, from such a spirit should arise a certain tranquillity and sweetness, so that grace and reason, and never vice and nature, should bear supreme sway over your passions. Oh! that your spirit may be ever uniform and even! Beware of extremes. The spirit of wisdom is the teacher of sobriety. He will have neither defect nor excuse. Moderation lasts long. Do not take this maxim in the sense that you are to do little. This is a most false interpretation. He is moderate who is master of himself. You will ascertain to what degree of moderation your spirit has attained, by the manner in which you bear unexpected and difficult trials. You will need time and labor to arrive at the perfection of this grace. But he who begins will not fail to arrive at it, if only he turns not back again. Many have arrived at it who were like you, and even less than you. Follow the Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of

firmness and consistency, and doubt not. You will succeed according to the due measure of your state. But if, from time to time, by God's permission some sparks of evil fire kindle within your heart, raise your eyes and voice to Heaven, and cry, like the three holy children in the fiery furnace, — "Behold, our Lord, whom we worship, is able to deliver us," and you will feel a soft air breathing around, and a heavenly dew falling upon you.

III. POINT.

Oh! What sweet tears are those which the Holy Spirit causes us to shed. He makes us weep,—at the thought of Heaven with holy desire — over our sins in penitence. He makes us weep tears of tender devotion. It is a weeping full of all consolation. Do you weep? Of what kind are your tears? Are they conformed to the Spirit of Jesus Christ? If not, they are not good tears. You weep, perhaps, for the things of the world, because you can no longer rejoice with the world. Ah! this is a senseless weeping, worthy itself of many tears. The Spirit of the Lord moves not over such waters to make them fruitful. Restrain your tears; and if you cannot help weeping a little over some earthly

sorrow, at least make your tears fruitful, by guiding them through the channel of patience to their source, which is the will of God. Oh! if your tears be given to the miseries of your soul, they will be sweet and profitable indeed. There is a time to weep and a time to rejoice; but, in truth, there is no better time to rejoice than when we weep, with all our hearts over the evils of our hearts. O, what sweet tears! There will never be an end of weeping, until God wipes away the tears. In this life we are in the valley. The waters flow downwards. Thy Holy Spirit will draw them upwards, and they will ascend to the eternal hills. Oh, that you had the gift of tears. Desire it, at least, with the thirst of the wounded heart, and the very thirst for tears shall begin to solace you amidst your weeping.

Meditation

For Friday after the Octave of the Ascension.

"Wash what is defiled, water what is dry, heat what is wounded."

First Prelude: Represent to yourself the Blessed Virgin with the Apostles and Disciples assembled in the Cenacle.

Second Prelude: Let us entreat the Holy Spirit to remove from us all obstacles that would prevent us from receiving Him with the fullness of His gifts.

I. POINT.

Sin is the stain of the soul; and, oh! what stain! It is the very same which makes the devil hideous. If an angel was so fearfully deformed by one single sin of pride, how loathsome, deformed and monstrous is a man defiled by many sins. All the waters of the deluge would not suffice to wash away a single sin. Yet, one drop from the fountain of the Holy Spirit is sufficient to purify them all. O most efficacious water! The good king David, who had shed so many tears, never ceased to ask of God's great mercy water, and still more water, to purify and cleanse his conscience more and more.

The guilt of his offence was already pardoned; nevertheless, he cried continually; "wash me yet more," And you? Alas! too soon do you wipe away your tears; nay, perhaps you think with scorn of shedding them. How much have you wept over your past and buried sins? But why do I speak of them? Do you even desire to weep with all your heart over your new and

daily transgressions? Alas! God grant that you may not look upon them with calm and cheerful eye.

The vain and proud soul, which will not look into herself to see what she is, nor whether she is becoming fairer in the sight of God, compares herself with some more hideous soul, saying that she is not as bad as they, seeks for a flattering mirror, and if, by chance, she meets with one which does not deceive her, but faithfully reflects her image, she is angry; and, if she does not break it, she departs and looks upon it no more. "He goeth his way, and forgetteth what manner of man he was." Be not you like these: forget not your miseries, consider their multitude and their heinousness; there will always be much to weep over, and to be cleansed more and more. Nothing impure can enter Heaven, nor can the Holy Spirit make His paradise amid defilement. Beseech Him to cleanse your will, your memory, your understanding, your imagination, all your powers, whether internal or enternal, that no stain or shadow of a stain be left upon any of them. Cleanse even the least and most hidden: even those which you know not: even those which lurk amidst the white linen of your good works. Cleanse from head to

foot, the whole extent of your thoughts and your affections. Unless you be pure of heart, you cannot behold the face of the Holy Spirit. However pious, devout and beautiful may be the Novena which you make to Him, unless you die to sin, what fruit will it bear for eternal life? The purification of the heart is of absolute necessity to him who has loaded and infected it with evil humors. Oh! if the Holy Spirit vouchsafe to cleanse and purify you, though you were blacker than an Ethiopian, you would be made at once whiter than snow, "Wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow."

II. POINT.

The tempest of sin has been fearful; it has devastated your vineyard. It has left you nothing good, but that poor little stem of dead faith. It has carried away everything else—vintage, and fruit, and flowers. Everything is dried and burnt up: to restore it, it is necessary that the Holy Spirit should plant it again, and water it, thus giving it life and increase. Oh! if He will but water it, merits will flourish once more, virtues will bud, good works will spring up. There shall be no more vestige of barrenness and desolation. All will be cultivated, all will be fruitful. He says not *rain* but *water*.

The rain comes now and then, but the waters of the fountain are ever at hand: Therefore, do you beseech Him to give you the ever flowing waters of His grace. A water not only common to all, which even falls fruitfully upon the wicked, to their greater condemnation, but that special stream which by your faithful use of it, shall produce its full effect. Water which flows whithersoever it is needed, not like a shower of rain, which does all its work without your help, but like a stream for which you must labor to provide a channel for your special need. Here observe that you are not the owner of the fountain; you only enjoy the use of the water. According to His own order, not according to your will, says St. Cyprian, does the Holy Spirit minister His grace to us. Nevertheless, you must take it when it is offered to you, and not trust that it will be always time enough, because it is an open fountain; who knows that you may not one day find it closed? Take care that it does not overflow; or stagnate by the way: see that the aqueduct be not brocken or choked up, but that the whole of it, even to the very least drop, may find its way, and penetrate even to the root. "The barren tree shall become like the tree planted by the waterside, which

bringeth forth itsfruit in due season, whose leaf also shall not wither."

III. POINT.

Look upon yourself as a paralytic, as a leper, as one of that multitude of lame, dropsical, and sick of every kind, whom our Lord miraculously healed. Thus to imagine yourself covered with the loathsome wounds and sores will excite you to horror and compassion for yourself, and, in truth, this gangrene of sin is far more horrible: Therefore, great reason have you to cry, "Heal what is wounded." For if the wounds be healed, there may, nevertheless, remain the scars of some evil habit. God grant that there may not still be left the source of some evil humor. You may still need balm to strengthen the injured parts, and antidotes to preserve it from future injury. The remains of past illness, — such as weakness in resisting dangerous occasions, dizziness of the head when thinking of God, palpitation of the heart in our intercourse with the world, and so forth: all these require His healing power. To all these malignant affections, ask Him to apply the touch of His healing hand to effect a perfect cure. The soul, which, before its sickness, cared little or nothing for health,

having now learnt caution at its own expense, must live carefully, like a convalescent. The Holy Spirit has given it a good rule of health. It fears, and will ever fear, every kind of danger and disorder; it will avoid going too much abroad, be careful as to diet, make use of every means of support; above all, it will have frequent recourse to the Physician, often consulting Him, and repeating continually: "Heal what is wounded." But, if you desire a perfect and permanent cure, make use of the remedies prescribed for you, obediently and generously. Be not so much afraid of the necessary means of painful cure — penance, vigil, and prayer. Again, what avails it to say, "heal, heal," if you would be treated at your own caprice? You would soon become worse than before. God grant that while you are prescribing rules and measures to your physician, you may not perish suddenly by some mortal and incurable disease.

Meditation

For the Eve of Pentecost.

First Prelude: Represent to yourself the Blessed Virgin, with the Apostles and Disciples assembled in the Cenacle.

Second Prelude: Ask to fully participate in the gifts and fruits of the Spirit of Love.

I. POINT.

"Bend what is rigid." A docile heart is what the Holy Spirit requires of you; but in order to obtain it, it is necessary that He should give it to you, and that you should desire it. If you desire it, ask it of Him, and you will obtain it. In the spiritual course there is nothing more dangerous than rigidity of will. How can a plant be brought to perfection which is determined to grow its own way? Oh, fallacious intentions, which are sometimes most crooked, when they seem to us most direct. The gardener finds great trouble from certain hard and difficult knots in the wood. They are wholly opposed to his sweet and gentle spirit. He would not have you stubborn in your own opinion; he would have you docile and yielding to his will. The most certain tokens that we are not erring from the way of God, are "Obedience" and "Humility." They shall all be taught of God. Like meek and simple sheep who trust to their shepherd and follow Him. You are not docile because you are not meek and detached. Your affections are entangled; you cannot detach them and

bend them according to the will of God. He presumes too much upon himself who would be his own teacher and guide; no one is a fitting judge in his own cause. Your offering is not acceptable to the Lord because your own will, not His, is found therein. Bend, then, bend. Let the unchangeable maxim of your willing or not willing be this: God wills or wills not. "Not what I will but what Thou wilt." If, in things otherwise good and holy, it is fitting we should resign ourselves to God's disposal, what must be said of those who desire to live and believe without reference to His counsels or suggestions? Never say that you have made a resolution never to forgive such a person, or other purposes of the like sinful kind. No; make other and better vows for some greater good, and not with regard to frivolous and forbidden things. Inflexibility in evil is the characteristic of Lucifer, and not of man, far less of the wise man who knows how to change his purpose at a fitting time and place. Woe to the mariner who refuses to steer and alter his course according to wind and tide. As to Faith, who will dare to prefer his own opinion to the Sovereign Pontiff's Sacred Councils, holy Fathers; to martyrs, miracles, theologians, princes, people, and

all the witnesses and confessors of the Catholic Faith? Let there be in you what St. Austin calls a goodly credulity, a certain facility and promptness to love and revere all divine revelations and ecclesiastical traditions. Thus will the Holy Spirit continually mould your heart, and more according to the heart of God. "Thou wilt give Thy servant a docile heart."

II. POINT.

You have already said: "enkindle;" but it is not enough that the fire be kindled; that its first heat be kept up strong and bright, it needs to be continually fostered, and, therefore you add: "warm." But do not wait to say this when you are at the point of death. No, say it continually to the Divine Spirit, that He may be pleased to remain within your heart, and to stimulate its fervor. Woe to you, if the ardor of your holy purposes and exercises should grow cold. You would gradually arrive at the freezing point. To-day you would omit one devotion, to-morrow another; and too soon, alas! that great fire which was enkindled when you were converted to God, would leave no token behind it but dust and ashes. Warm, then, and that more and more. Do not dream that you can

keep up that fire in a lower degree. Not only is the state of tepidity most hateful to God, and most pernicious in itself, but it is the doctrine most commonly received, and confirmed by experience, that it cannot last long. How can you endure such icy cold within, such furious winds without? I do not wish to extinguish by fear that little spark of charity which still shines in your almost darkened heart. "Quench not the smoking flax." I would only warn you that, if now, when the Holy Spirit is breathing upon you with more than His wonted sweet vehemence, you still remain cold, your state is not far from hopeless.

III. POINT.

Oh! how far has he wandered out of the way who walks not in the light of the Holy Spirit! Would you know whether you are in the right way, that is, in the way of your vocation? Lift up your eyes to Heaven. If there shines over your head the leading star of a holy purpose, take courage and persevere. You are in the right way. But if you are in doubt which way to take, or have already entered upon some dubious path, turn to the Holy Spirit, and ask Him to guide and direct you. Only in the road of sin, which is the road of perdition, you

may not walk; it is a road too full of difficulties, wide though the entrance be. Turn back, O you who repent that you have entered it, for it is yet time. All other roads of the different states which are in the Church of God, are fair and good. It is true that one is shorter, surer, or more direct than another; but you may walk along any of them with your cross on your shoulder, right onward to Jesus who stands waiting for you at the end of them all. We see some who walk more swiftly on their way, and nearer to their Leader. Remember you are a religious; you can and you ought to travel along it with swift steps to the perfection which belongs to your state. Why so many disgressions and delays? A traveller does not take up his abode in the country through which he is passing, nor fix his affections upon it. You are like a poor pilgrim who has to pass but two or three days in the world; and Oh! with how many useless things do you burden yourself, while you neglect to provide yourself with the true Viaticum — the Viaticum for the other world. You treasure up everything for this world, nothing for the next. Take a little more thought, I beseech you, for your journey. Whither goest thou? To Paradise, your country. Death comes to

meet you; and your life, whether sinful or holy, follows after you. You linger by the side of this pleasure which flies from you; by the fountain of that gold which vanishes away; by the shadow of that honor which forsakes you in a moment. O sweet, swift Spirit! most holy Spirit! most luminous Spirit! make the crooked straight, and be ever a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. O Holy Spirit, sweet Comforter, who proceedest in an ineffable manner from the Father and the Son, come, I beseech Thee, and enter into my heart. Cleanse my soul from the stains of sin; sanctify it, heal its wounds, bend its stiffness, warm its chill, and guide its waywardness; make me truly humble and resigned; and do Thou ever rest upon me, O most Blessed Light! Light of all loveliness, be Thou shed upon me! O Fountain of most pure delights! give Thyself to me, and enkindle in my breast the fire of Thy love. Teach Thou me, O my God! Guide and protect me in all things. Strengthen my spirit against an undue weakness of purpose; vouchsafe unto me a right faith, and unswerving hope, and a sincere and perfect charity; and grant that I may always do Thy most gracious will, that I may find that peace upon earth which Thou hast promised.

Brief Sketch

OF THE TWO FOUNDERS OF THE

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Puy.

Mgr. Henry de Maupas du Tour.

Henry Cauchon de Maupas du Tour, Bishop of Puy, belonged on his Mother's side, to the noble family de Condi, and hence had the happiness of being brought up under the direction of St. Vincent de Paul.

He was, despite his opposition, appointed Bishop of Le Puy in 1644. On Oct. 15th 1650 he established in his Episcopal City, at the suggestion of the Rev. John Paul Médaille, a celebrated Missionary of the Society of Jesus, the "little Institute" of the Sisters of St. Joseph, as he loved to call it, in imitation of St. Francis de Sales, who delighted in thus speaking of his beloved Visitation.

In 1659, he wrote the first life of St. Francis de Sales, and in dedicating the same to Pope Alexander VII, he says: — "Without detriment to the esteem which I

have for other Orders, I have wished to institute the humble Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph on the model, and in the same spirit, as that of the Sisters of the Visitation, before they embraced enclosure."

In 1660 he went to Paris to pronounce the funeral eulogy of St. Vincent de Paul; and in 1661 he was translated to the See of Evreux. In the course of the same year he was sent to Rome to introduce the cause of the Canonization of St. Francis de Sales. He died in the odor of sanctity, full of age and merit, in his City of Evreux, Aug. 12, 1680.

While certain excavations were being made for the erection of a new high altar in the Cathedral of that City, the remains of Mgr. de Maupas were discovered on the 26th of Feb. 1895, still clothed in the Sacred Vestments, with a rosary on the arm which extended to the feet.

In the tomb was found a leaden plate, bearing in Latin the full inscription:—

"Henri de Maupas du Tour, Bishop of Evreux and formerly of Puy, Abbot of St. Denis of Rheims, and of the Isle of Chauvet, in the diocese of Lucon. He died August 12, 1680, aged . . . ." Father of the Poor" . . . . . The rest of the inscription was, unfortunately, completely effaced.

It is much to be regretted that the Epitaph of this saintly prelate was partially obliterated. But what remains:—"Father of the Poor" contains in itself a whole history of holy deeds and precious merits, so as to entitle him, apart from the filial love and reverence due him as Founder of our Institute, to our profound respect and sincerest veneration.

Reverend John Paul Médaille, S. J.

Founder of the Institute of St. Joseph of Puy.

This venerable Father was born at Carcassonne, in the South of France, on the future feast of St. Francis de Sales, January 29, 1618. Having entered the College of Tournon at the age of fifteen, he was admitted into the Society on the 15th of August, 1640. According to the historian of the Society at Toulouse, where he had entered, he was first employed to teach Grammar and the Humanities in the same College, for the space of several years; later on, he taught philosophy for six years, and afterwards became preacher and Missionary which office he exercised with the zeal and fervor of an apostle.

He was a fervent disciple of St. Francis

Regis, and after having been formed in the school of this Saint, he was sent to the same missionary fields in which this great Saint had labored and preached before him. In every way the disciple was not unworthy of the Master: for his labors, like those of his predecessor, St. Francis Regis, brought forth fruits of holiness and charity in abundance. The districts of Velay, Auvergne, Languedoc, Aix and Avignon — wherever he preached — gave proofs of his charity and apostolic zeal.

To enhance and perpetuate the work of his missions, he established everywhere fervent confraternities of men and women, who gave themselves to the exercise of all the works of mercy, both spiritual and corporal. Thus the fruits of his zealous labors were everywhere preserved, and multiplied exceedingly.

It was during the period of his Apostolic Ministry that our Venerated Father found, in the various fields he evangelized, some fervent, holy souls whom he believed to be called to the religious life, yet who had also a marked attraction for the exercise of works of charity in behalf of the neighbor.

Being convinced that an association of religious women which would embrace this twofold end, would do great good in the

Church, he became most anxious to procure such a foundation. The concurrence of a Bishop was, however, necessary, and Father Médaille having been called to preach the Lent at Le Puy, in 1649, communicated his design to the Bishop of that City, well knowing his sublime virtue and extraordinary zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. That prelate at once heartily entered into his views, since he himself had been persuaded that it was God's will to have carried into effect the idea which St. Francis de Sales had had so much at heart in founding the daughters of the Visitation: namely, "to unite the duties of Martha and Mary, the exterior works of charity with the repose of contemplation."

At the request of Mgr. de Maupas, Madame Lucretia de la Planche, a noble widow, who had often aided him in his plans for the glory of God, consented to receive the members of the new Institute into her house; and there, under the direction of Rev. Father Médaille, they made the necessary preparations for their entrance into the religious state. On the fifteenth of October, 1650, the Bishop gave them the Habit in the Chapel of the Orphan Asylum of Le Puy, which he then committed to their care. Placing them under the pro-

tection of the glorious St. Joseph whom he gave as their Model, he ordained that they should henceforth be known as the "Sisters or Daughters of St. Joseph."

The rules were prayerfully elaborated by the two Founders, on the basis of those given by St. Francis de Sales to the first Visitandines, and which Bishop de Maupas called "the best guarantees for the future of the new Institute;" — Father Médaille added thereto others drawn from St. Ignatius: — All were formally approved by the Prelate, March 10th, 1651.

After having exercised his laborious and most fruitful apostolate for the space of eighteen years, our sainted Father was recalled to Toulouse where, in 1672, he was appointed Spiritual Father of the Professed House. He died some years later, at Auch, in the seventy-first year of his age, May 15th, 1689, in the odor of sanctity, and as says his biographer "they mourned, while invoking him."

His interest in the Congregation he bequeathed to Rev. J. Peter Médaille, also a celebrated Missionary laboring in the same districts as he himself had done before him, and Author of the "Meditations sur les Evangiles de l'année," who lived for some time with him in the College of Toulouse,

and who died Spiritual father of the same, Sept, 8, 1709, at the age of 73.

Although he did not create the foundation of our Institute, as was by some writers erroneously believed, he sustained the work of the elder Father and propagated our Institute, wherever his missionary labors called him.

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